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CHAPTER I

M. CAMBON AND THE ENTENTE

IN the spring of 1920 there were persistent rumours that the French Ambassador in London, M. Paul Cambon, would retire before August.

The momentous decision finally taken by the British Government in August, 1914, had been in no small measure due to M. Cambon's many years of patient preparatory work in view of the contingency of a clash between France and Germany; and also to the skill and tact he displayed during the trying weeks after Austria made her demands upon Serbia. Sir Edward Grey was reluctant to realise that the diplomatic structure for which he was so largely responsible was only a house of cards. Day by day the facts accumulated which convinced him that a European war was unavoidable. But his feelings fought with his reason; and he hesitated to take or to advise any step which would bind the country to a definite policy if hostilities broke out. The Foreign Secretary's intentions were in a fluid state, and did not stiffen as quickly as the situation hardened.

M. Cambon struggled in vain to obtain a pronouncement satisfactory to France. There were moments when, I believe, he thought that what he regarded as his life's work had been brought to nought. However, the diplomatic world, both at home and abroad, gave him full credit for his part in bringing about the final result. But while soldiers are sometimes

rewarded, and politicians always, when possible, reward themselves or each other, the work of Ambassadors and Ministers who represent their country abroad nowadays gets little general recognition. It is doubtful if even to-day the French Republic entirely realises what it owes to the work of Paul Cambon in London and to that of his brother Jules in Berlin.

The French Embassy was, to all intents and purposes, M. Cambon, assisted by M. de Fleuriau.* They had been in London for more than twenty years and before that were together in Constantinople. Although there were from time to time amongst the secretaries men of some ability (notably the Ambassador's nephew, M. Roger Cambon, who is still at Albert Gate), yet upon the whole M. Cambon did not seek so much to surround himself with coming men as with those who would be content to stay an indefinite period even at the cost of some loss of promotion in the Service ; as indeed some of them did.

The disadvantages resulting from this system were felt more severely after than during the war—when the Embassy had been temporarily reinforced by eminent experts. Moreover, the Embassy began to some extent to lose touch with the outside world. M. Cambon had himself been for more than a generation a distinguished figure in London society. But owing to the fact that he was a widower he had never entertained largely. Now that he approached the age of fourscore years he went out less, while the Embassy became more than ever *une maison fermée*.

It was obvious that M. Cambon would choose his own moment to retire. But it was equally clear that

* M. de Fleuriau is now Minister in Peking.

his departure would not be long delayed ; and it was therefore natural that those who actively aspired to succeed him should begin to let their qualifications be known in the proper quarter. I quote from my diary some extracts regarding certain steps taken towards that end; as well as others showing the feelings which prevailed in France during 1920, when the sincerity of Mr. Lloyd George's friendship first began seriously to be doubted, and the political relations between the two countries imperilled.

Paris, May 1st, 1920.

Some five or six weeks ago X came to see me in London. I knew that during the war he had acted for various French Ministers in their confidential relations with members of our Government, but had never been intimate with him. We lunched and dined together several times, both alone and with others, and he soon disclosed that his object was to ask me if I would sound a certain personage, and see if I could get from him some private expression of opinion favourable to M. Painlevé being the successor of M. Cambon, and which could be used in that way. It appeared that X had a personal interest in the matter as he hoped temporarily to relinquish his present official position and to accompany Painlevé to London as Counsellor of the Embassy. I told him that although I happened to know that the personage in question was excessively well-disposed towards Painlevé, and that (although it was a delicate matter) his temperament would probably lead him to go further than would some more discreet but less brilliant politician, yet that I neither thought I was

the best person to see him about it nor, in any event, did I care to do so. But I indicated a member of Parliament whom I thought might be a willing and acceptable emissary.

During the last week in March I happened to be in Paris and lunched one day with Painlevé, X and Y, who had formerly been in Clémenceau's Ministry. I talked to them quite freely about the general situation. Painlevé asked me whether the recent bitter attacks in the French Press were creating a hostile feeling in England. I told him that they were not creating any hostile feeling whatever, but that the man-in-the-street was coming to the conclusion that so far England had done what she could for France, and that if France was not satisfied it was impossible to satisfy her; while the extremists would take advantage of this to suggest that each country had better go its own way—which was a dangerous idea. The point rather struck Painlevé.

Painlevé said quite openly that he would like to have the London Embassy. It happened that Y was seeing M. Millerand later in the day, and they asked me to allow him to make a certain statement as coming from me, which I would support if necessary. This I refused to do, pointing out that while I had no objection to answering any questions put to me as to my view about any particular person probably being acceptable or otherwise in London, yet I certainly did not want either to place myself in the position of discussing on my own initiative a matter which had nothing to do with me nor with any other Englishman, nor did I care to get mixed up in anything which might even remotely be considered as an

intrigue against M. Cambon, who had always been my very good friend. I said, however, that they could quote me as stating that many of us would regret if B were sent to London. It was no secret that his friends were using every effort on his behalf.

In any event, I gathered from what Y told me, when I was talking to him alone, that in his opinion Millerand would not be in favour of Painlevé succeeding M. Cambon.

When I returned here a few days ago I lunched with Painlevé. He knows now that there is no chance of his being sent to England at present; for my own part, I do not believe that there is any chance at all.

He has therefore arranged to go to China on some mission which he had really undertaken before the war began. I think myself that if he wants to play a part in political life he makes a mistake, as many things may possibly happen in six months; although he is so much out of sympathy with the present Chamber that his absence perhaps matters less than it otherwise would.

The next night I dined with Y, who undoubtedly will soon be again in the Government. He confirmed what X had written me about M. Millerand's statement.

On Thursday afternoon I spent an hour with M. Poincaré, X going with me. I have always known Poincaré as excessively cold, and was therefore agreeably surprised when he was very cordial. X told me that he had never seen him so much so. We discussed openly not only the English-French situation, but the question of the Embassy; and I came away with the clear impression that Poincaré would like to go to London. Indeed, apart from being Prime Minister,

or possibly Minister of Foreign Affairs, it is probably the only post which, as a former President of the Republic, he could or would accept. While now that he has resigned the Presidency of the Reparation Commission, he is seeking for some way to take an active part in public life. Poincaré told me that he had seen the *précis* of the discussion of the Reparation question at San Remo ; and that at first Lloyd George had been distinctly anti-French.

On Friday afternoon I went to the Elysée, where Deschanel received me at 6.30 p.m., and kept me for more than an hour (he had given me an appointment about ten days earlier, but I had been obliged to telegraph that I was unable to leave London). I had not seen him for some time and found him looking much older. One always remarks the scar which is the relic of his famous duel with Clémenceau some thirty years ago. He is just as *accueillant* as Poincaré is generally the reverse ; but, nevertheless, one feels immediately that the intelligence is not of the same calibre. With M. Deschanel I discussed exactly the same subjects, and with even more freedom. I would not have spoken about the Embassy, but as he asked me to do so I answered his questions fully.

To the President, as to all of these people, I said that they must realise that those who had not followed Lloyd George in the past meant to keep him in power now, that he was very susceptible to attacks in the Press, but that the difference between attacks by the English and attacks by the French Press was that as regards the former, while they sometimes irritated him, he knew that they might affect his position and acted accordingly ; whereas attacks in the French

Press merely irritated him without having any other effect, as he knew that they could not put him out of Downing Street. I pointed out, further, that attacks in the French Press detached many friends of France who, while they did not mind speaking openly themselves about the Prime Minister, did not like others to do so.

On Friday morning I spent an hour with Lord Derby. I told him how both Poincaré and Painlevé had expressed their sense and appreciation of the way in which he had acted during the recent trouble about the French having occupied Frankfurt and other towns ; doing everything for his own country and supporting the attitude of his own Government, but always trying to put the French view in a favourable light.

Lord Derby surprised me by referring to the question of who was likely to succeed M. Cambon. To my utter astonishment, he said that he thought that B would be the best man for us, and he told me a certain step he had taken (legitimately enough) to strengthen these chances.

This afternoon I saw M. Millerand and went over more or less the same ground with him. But more interesting than any discussion about the French Embassy (especially as I don't believe that he intends either to make any change at present or, anyway, to send any of those who now want it) was what he had to say about the present situation.

He told me that at San Remo Lloyd George went almost white when talking of the supposed desire of France to increase her territory. Millerand was convinced either that Lloyd George believed it himself or that he was influenced by his desire to please a

group that did. Of course the latter is the truth. Lloyd George still has half an eye to the Radicals.

Millerand told me that he had been entirely opposed to the Germans being called to Spa, and that he eventually said that he would consent only on two conditions: first, that there should be no revision of the Treaty, and, secondly, that the Allies should agree amongst themselves what they should say at each meeting. He said that Lloyd George first agreed to the conditions, then said that he would not accept them, but finally did so. Nevertheless, Millerand says that before they meet at Spa he means to get it in black and white from Lloyd George, which is entirely right. His own view is that there should be no conversations with the Germans, but that they might be heard; and then any proper use might be made of anything they had to say. That, of course, is the wise course.

Millerand, both physically and mentally, is like a bull. He is not adaptable and probably cannot change his base easily, but he is both straight and upright and excessively forcible. He pointed out to me that if there was to be any revision of the Treaty the whole matter should be taken up again both in the Chamber here and in the House of Commons in London. He discussed Lloyd George with me very openly and very personally.

I suggested to him that the sound and proper basis for the Entente on our side was not solely sentiment (although that was a useful cement), but a realisation of the fact that it was the foundation of our safety, as the frontiers of France were now practically the frontiers of Great Britain; and that that should be more widely and more generally understood.

CHAPTER II

MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S DICTATORSHIP (1918-1922): HONOURS AND THE SECRETARIAT

THAT scattered charter which is known as the British Constitution is so flexible in its nature and adapts itself so naturally to the needs of each successive generation that the most vital and far-reaching changes often become effective before their creation is generally perceived or realised. The outstanding contrast is the rigid Constitution of the United States of America. In the years which have passed since 1798, there have, in all, been only nineteen amendments, none of which has been made without a full discussion and vote by the legislatures of the various States which composed the Union.*

But while the basis of the British Constitution rests embedded in various statutes, all that relates to its operation has sprung spontaneously from the desires or necessities of the age. It was in that silent fashion that the Cabinet system came into operation. The alterations in practice which were wrought by the war (and which threatened to supersede that system) were equally portentous. At the time they were considered to be incidental to an abnormal period. But

* Of course, some amendments were made after the War of Secession, when the Southern States were still disfranchised.

their retention and the general march of events after the Armistice proved that they stood every chance of becoming constitutional changes. It is doubtful if there is yet any general comprehension of their full scope.

The salient result under Mr. Lloyd George was that the Prime Minister had much more power than he had in 1914. He was to all intents and purposes the President of the country. As such he not only had infinitely more authority than the President of the French Republic and the French Prime Minister combined, but also more than the President of the United States, who is practically his own Prime Minister.*

The French President is so absolutely under Parliamentary control that all his executive acts must be countersigned by one of the members of the Cabinet. Theoretically he may have the right to dissolve the legislature. But since the days of Marshal MacMahon, no President has seriously considered that to be a prerogative which he would dare to exercise, except possibly in the case where an absolute parliamentary deadlock might imply a virtual, if unwilling, parliamentary assent. It is true that the President presides at Cabinet meetings, and that his personal influence there makes itself felt in proportion to the force of character possessed by himself and the *Président du Conseil* respectively. But there are often circumstances which force him to ask someone with whom he knows he is temperamentally incompatible to become Prime Minister.

The most celebrated of these occasions was

* The Secretary of State, who is technically the senior member of the American Cabinet, can, of course, be dismissed at will by the President.

when, after the fall of the Painlevé Ministry, Poincaré requested Clémenceau to take his succession. Clémenceau detested Poincaré, as much as does Mr. Lloyd George to-day; as much as Clémenceau, a little later, disliked Woodrow Wilson. Not only were they fundamentally repugnant the one to the other, but there was the memory of comparatively recent bitter clashes. No one who was at Versailles in January, 1913, will forget the lengths to which Clémenceau, aided by the late Camille Pelletan, went to defeat Poincaré and to send M. Pams to the Elysée. But in 1917, Poincaré was obliged to request his uncompromising opponent to accept office, was obliged to give him power.

The statement, which has sometimes been made, that the only alternative choice was M. Caillaux is, I think, an exaggeration. But undoubtedly anyone else would only have been a stop-gap. The question "Clémenceau or Caillaux?" would soon have arisen; and, after the failure of another Ministry pledged to pursuing the war, Clémenceau's task would have been rendered still more difficult. Poincaré had no feud with Caillaux although the latter's personal career shocked his sense of propriety.* But he was entirely opposed to his policy, and he chose Clémenceau because he was then the strongest pillar; indeed, the last hope of those who favoured a vigorous continuance of the war until victory was achieved. The immediate result was what Poincaré himself foresaw. The tribulations of the war did not soften Clémenceau's habitual asperity. He sometimes

* Poincaré had refused Caillaux's offer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1911.

treated the President with scant courtesy. The long and precise letters which the vigilant Poincaré always showered upon his Prime Ministers were often entirely ignored or the advice which they contained roughly rejected. Upon one occasion, when the Armistice terms were being determined, Clémenceau even told the President with undisguised acerbity that he was going beyond his constitutional functions, and that if there was any further interference he would resign. It may be said in passing that it is equally doubtful whether Clémenceau's statement was correct, and whether subsequent events have not proved that Poincaré's counsel was sound.

Daily intercourse of this nature was particularly trying to one of M. Poincaré's disposition. His cold reserve is indicative of his sensitiveness ; and although he will hold to his opinions with all the tenacity of a Lorrainer, he can be checked in urging them if he is rebuffed. That was shown at one stage of his conversations with Mr. Lloyd George at the London Conference in August, 1922. For M. Poincaré seems timid because he is naturally reserved ; he is not reserved because he is timid.

The functions of the French President have become so mechanical that before and during the war many politicians (including even that greatest of French parliamentarians, M. Briand) advocated some constitutional revision, which would increase his powers and lessen those of the legislature.

Since that period Mr. Woodrow Wilson's exhibition of how an uncontrolled chief executive of a republic can do quite as much harm as an absolute monarch has halted the agitation. But the last

public act of the late M. Deschanel was to bear witness to the impotency of the occupant of the Elysée. In a speech which he was to have delivered in the Senate on March 31st, 1922 (and which, after his death, was published in *La Revue des Deux Mondes*), he testified that his own experience had shown him that if upon any essential question the opinion of the President was not the same as that of the majority of the Cabinet; "even if he has on his side the Minister of War and the heads of the Army," he is unable to do anything, and cannot even let his view become known. While he rightly remarked that the clause in the Constitution which says, "Le Président de la République négocie et ratifie les traités" is a pure fiction. In brief, as Sir Henry Maine once wrote, "The King of England reigns without ruling, and the President of the United States rules without reigning, but it has been reserved for the President of the French Republic neither to rule nor to reign."

Still more simple is the comparison of the powers of a British and a French Prime Minister. The latter is never or rarely supported by one party which has an absolute majority. In the most favourable circumstances he is only able to rely upon a *bloc* composed of a union of groups. But he may be, and generally is, upset not on a question of some policy, but at best upon his own execution of that policy; at worst upon some trivial question or as the result of a personal intrigue.

A British Prime Minister generally (although not always) meets a new Parliament with a majority which is good for some years. If a group of followers becomes too obstreperous or threatening, it can almost

invariably be cowed by the suggestion of a general election. How many times did Mr. Bonar Law, in his exact and meticulous tones, thus bring to earth and to a contemplation of stern realities the Unionist War Committee, or some deputation which had entered his room determined to insist upon the maintenance of certain political principles? A French Prime Minister, however, has no such weapon at his command. There is always someone else in the Chamber or Senate able to form a Government; there are always more willing to try. A dissolution is, therefore, never in question. He has not even the party advantage (as has, within certain limits, a tenant of Downing Street) of choosing his own date for a general election. For French legislators, untrammelled by the whims of the Whips, are not prone to concur in any unnecessary abbreviation of the life of Parliament.

Under the American Constitution the President has much more extensive prerogatives. But, in fact, they go no further than those which Mr. Lloyd George recently exercised. The President is, indeed, certain to remain in office (unless impeached) for four years. A hostile legislature may largely render his policy sterile (as was the case during Cleveland's second administration), but it cannot displace him. On the other hand, he, or his party, is bound to face the electorate at a fixed date, known to all men years in advance. It is doubtful whether the majority of astute politicians would not consider that a disadvantage outweighing the four years' security of office.

Again, the American Cabinet is not represented in either branch of, and is in no way responsible to, the legislature. So far as the policy of the Government

is concerned, and apart from the administrative duties of the respective offices, it simply forms an advisory committee, which the President consults and relies upon as his character or temperament may dictate. Woodrow Wilson, for instance, treated the members of his Cabinet as departmental heads, whom he kept in complete ignorance of his intentions.

The story of the Peace Conference, as told by his own Secretary of State, Mr. Robert Lansing, amply justifies that statement. But Mr. Lloyd George, when the fancy took him, did not act in any different way towards his colleagues. When they ceased to find favour in his eyes they often were not even admitted to his presence. This has happened more than once, as Mr. Montagu has related; while I recollect one who had been a member of his Ministry for some years, and who was not included in the new Cabinet formed after the General Election, 1918, relating to me that during that interval he had several times asked to have an interview with the Prime Minister, and was told that the latter had no spare time. Obviously Mr. Lloyd George did not deal with all his colleagues in this unceremonious manner. Never, for instance, would he have acted in that way towards Mr. Churchill. But then even Woodrow Wilson, during the early part of his first term, kept William Jennings Bryan as Secretary of State, until he was no longer a danger.

The extended authority which Mr. Lloyd George assumed or usurped was obtained by infringing in a small degree upon that which appertains to the Crown, and in a much larger degree upon that which properly belongs to Parliament. The former was illustrated by his mode of bestowing honours—a matter which is

perhaps more curious than important; the latter by the undermining of the doctrine of Cabinet responsibility, and, less directly, by the relegation of the Diplomatic Service to a sphere of comparative uselessness. It is true that the cavalier fashion in which Mr. Lloyd George was wont to treat the House of Commons in 1918 and 1919 changed perceptibly as the shadow of another general election approached, and that he was obliged to mend his ways in that regard after he lost the invaluable services of Mr. Bonar Law. But the root of the whole matter was the institution of the famous Secretariat. I propose to examine both these branches of the subject, in an endeavour to make clear how Mr. Lloyd George acquired powers more extensive than those ever enjoyed by any of his predecessors; and later on to show how he exercised this vast authority, which made him more absolutely the ruler of Great Britain than is the elected President of any democracy.

No recent public question has produced more loose talking, loose thinking, and, in many quarters, blatant hypocrisy, than the agitation about the bestowal of honours.

In 1841 Sir Robert Peel, referring to the demands for titles of which he was then the victim, wrote to Croker: "The voracity for these things quite surprises me. I wonder people do not begin to feel the distinction of an unadorned name." If Peel had been a little more human he would have understood that the average man will always want to be marked out from his fellows. It is an ingrained and—in itself—an entirely laudable ambition. How persistent it is may be seen in countries which neither recognise nor give titles. In France, although there have been no

creations since the fall of Napoleon III.—that is, for more than half a century—there are to-day innumerable more titles than ever before. It is true that part of this increase comes from the fact that every son of a Comte or a Marquis himself bears a title. But the growth is mainly due to unwarranted assumptions. In fact, the progress has been so rapid that the more discerning newcomers have begun to seek for something less common than a prefix to their family name. It is thus that the fashion of annexing a town or department first found favour: M. Cahen d'Anvers, M. Deutsch de la Meutre.

But the craving is seen still more clearly in the Orders which are conferred by the Republic—not only the Légion d'Honneur,* but the Palmes Académiques and the Mérite Agricole. The scramble for this right to wear a bit of ribbon in one's buttonhole is almost incredible. Each "promotion" is preceded by intrigue, and followed by dissatisfaction and jealousy. There is, of course, no difference in principle between giving a title to precede a name and a distinction to be written after it. Both equally infringe Republican simplicity. But that is a virtue which finds few practising adherents. It is the ambition of ninety out of every hundred Frenchmen to be decorated; and a very fair percentage of that ninety have already achieved it.†

* The war, of course, greatly increased the number. In 1914 there were 50,434 decorated with the Légion d'Honneur: 31,582 for military and 18,852 for civilian services. In 1922 there were 125,619, of whom 96,236 military and 29,383 civilians. In 1914, 63,104 had the right to wear the Médaille Militaire. In 1922, there were 369,442.—Report of M. de Baudry d'Asson on the Budget of the Grande Chancellerie de la Légion d'Honneur.

† Although a few of the most eminent, and notably M. Clémenceau, remain unribboned.

The thirst for titles will never be quelled by legislation, and prohibition is as impossible as it would be unnecessary. But it is perhaps better that their grant should be regulated as in this country. Here some people are born with titles, some achieve titles, and others have titles thrust upon them. It is in respect to the second of these categories that there is to-day cause for complaint. The situation rises partly from the hypocrisy which leads us to clothe facts with a fiction too transparent to deceive anyone.

Much of the criticism regarding recent creations was undoubtedly ill-founded and exaggerated. But, on the other hand, will any sane person contend that it was their outstanding merit amongst all the subjects of the Realm which caused the late Prime Minister to request the Sovereign to make the recipients hereditary legislators, and that they themselves were surprised when told of the honour which was to be conferred on them? Yet there is no sound reason why one should not ask for a peerage and let it be known that he has asked. There is no essential difference between that and openly begging one's fellow-citizens to send one to Parliament. Nobody imagines that the average Parliamentary candidate is a budding statesman, least of all does he think so himself. The greater number want to go to Westminster for quite other reasons. They bungle and boggle through their professions of faith as well as they can, their most sincere promise being to follow some particular leader; and follow him they generally do, through many a queer twist and turn. Yet they ask for powers which exceed those now exercised in the House of Lords.

For at present a peer is a cross between an official

eye-witness and a political eunuch. In brief, the qualifications demanded for the latter being no greater, and still more clearly defined (the possession of a certain fortune), why should it be thought proper to ask to be sent to legislate in the House of Commons, but improper to ask to be made an hereditary legislator, with much more limited powers for good or evil?

It is, however, a fact that a certain proportion of titles granted by the Crown have always been paid for, directly or indirectly, either in money or in political services rendered as a direct return. It is unnecessary to quibble, as in the recent Parliamentary debates, about whether the payment was actually made before or after the title was conferred. Presumably the subject was bound to trust the Sovereign, more than the Sovereign the subject. James I. founded the order of Baronets, and sold baronetcies openly for about six hundred pounds; many votes for the Act of Union with Ireland were purchased by the grant of a peerage. It has been alleged that the Cavendishes first took the title of Devonshire because the then head of the family and his king found themselves driving through that county (where the Cavendishes have never been landowners), when, after a protracted discussion, they finally came to terms.

For many generations past the Sovereign has not got the money, or, directly, the service resulting from such sales. But until a recent date he not only had, but in practice used, a veto in such matters. Mr. Lloyd George is not primarily responsible for weakening the personal power of the Crown. The decline began from the day of the Prince Consort's death.

The same routine was observed, and the Queen paid the same attention to detail, but the real authority began to pass into the hands of the politicians. There was a temporary recrudescence (though in its nature it was more apparent than real) when Disraeli exalted in the Queen's willing ears the idea of personal government. But that period died with Disraeli, and Mr. Lytton Strachey has rightly remarked that "at the end of the reign, the Crown was weaker than at any period in English history."

However, Queen Victoria would never consent to bestow any dignity upon anyone whom she herself considered unworthy of the honour. Her Prime Minister gave her his recommendations, with his reasons, but they were recommendations only, as the Queen did not necessarily concur in them. One qualification upon which she insisted for an hereditary title was the possession of an adequate fortune. Thus Disraeli would write submitting the name of Mr. A., and adding that he had an estate of ten thousand pounds a year, and would get more. Obviously, the idea was sound. But it should have been (and might yet be) carried a step further. For entails can be broken and money squandered, and it is desirable that the fortune should last as long as the peerage.

No earthly majesty can guard against the inexplicable tricks of heredity. Experience has shown that the most austere of men may perpetuate his name in a son or a grandson of frivolous tastes—or worse. But freaks of fortune might be guarded against. Eminent services rendered to the State have sometimes been rewarded with a peerage, together with a grant to allow the recipient to maintain himself in that station

of life to which he has been called. In brief, the State ensures that those who have undeniable claims to a certain rank shall have the means to support it. Logically, why should the State not be equally vigilant in seeing that those whose claims are somewhat less incontestable make proper and certain provision for themselves and their heirs? Every recipient of an hereditary title should be obliged to deposit with the Government a fixed amount, the interest upon which would be paid to himself and to his successors in the title, the principal to be returned to the executors of the last holder.

In any event, the fiction of "the man whom the King delighteth to honour" has definitely and finally disappeared. Even the last vestige of the Royal prerogative—that of a veto—seems to have gone. Were it otherwise one might look to the Sovereign for an explanation of some recent titles. But it has been stated in print (and never denied) that on one occasion the King objected to a certain person being made a Privy Councillor, and was told that it was a political appointment to which he was constitutionally bound to assent. While one of the first of the peerages for which Mr. Lloyd George was responsible is also said to have met with resistance which was overcome in the same fashion.

Indeed, in the most recent Parliamentary debate on this subject Mr. Lloyd George, in admitting that some mistakes had been made, specifically said that he alone was responsible for the "recommendations" upon which the Sovereign granted titles. His general defence—which proved to be one of his feeblest efforts—was that he did nothing worse

than his predecessors. That is rather a weak plea coming from Mr. Lloyd George. A Tory of a century ago might consistently have said, "We've governed this way and we are going to continue to do so"; and equally an old Whig might have kept on doing so—without avowing it quite so bluntly. But it is not very congruous for a Welsh Radical to say that he is content to follow others in adopting a form of political corruption.

The truth is that Mr. Lloyd George is sincerely contemptuous of such things. Everything he said on the question substantiates the belief that he regards titles as a useful and easy means of replenishing party funds. But if he views the matter in that light he would be well advised to take some care if he is ever again in a position to bestow titles. For, although there will always be many who "love dukes for dukes' sake," the market value of peerages has already been reduced by recent events; while the effect in that way of the coming reform of the House of Lords remains to be seen. A peer who will only be able to stand on the steps of the Throne or at the Bar of the House and listen to debates will be somewhat emasculated.

The Royal Commission is instructed to advise on the procedure to be adopted to assist the Prime Minister in making recommendations to his Sovereign. If its functions are kept strictly within those limits, its report is unlikely to be of much practical value. There is little use in stirring up the matter at all unless one goes to the root of it. What that root is everyone knows perfectly well—party funds. On that point Mr. Lloyd George was quite frank. Evidently it is

that system which he did not wish to be disturbed, for he made an extraordinary argument about the value of political honours, contending that if they were not granted "the danger was that political organisations would collapse, and the extermination of political organisations was political chaos. It was rather the cant in certain circles to gibe at politicians. The sudden collapse of Germany in 1918 would never have happened if Germany had had political organisations, skilled and trained, and organised for the purpose of appealing to the national sentiment and arousing the national spirit."

It was one of those occasions upon which the Prime Minister's ardent imagination led him to paint too dark a picture of a horrible future : a period when no political honours could be exchanged for cheques, and when consequently there would be no organisations to arouse party (not necessarily national) feelings shortly before a general election, thus bringing about a state of political chaos. Mr. Lloyd George was sometimes an alarmist. He liked solemnly to warn his critics of the weight of their responsibility. But his comparisons with other countries will not bear serious examination. His general statement, "Let them turn to other countries which have not our methods of encouraging party service," in conjunction with his dictum about the necessity of maintaining political organisations by giving political honours (a particularly graceful way of saying "cheques for titles") in order to avoid lapsing into the group as distinguished from the party system, does not merit any serious consideration.

In many countries the group system arises from the

inability to preserve party lines, inherent in the Latin temperament, because it is both more personal and more speculative than our own. In Germany, where it was not so deeply rooted as it was in France, it arose from entirely different causes; partly the way in which political institutions were then brought into being, partly because there was a certain lack of political liberty, but mainly because the Germans are not a political race, and the mass of the people is not, and never will be, interested in politics. Analogies with other nations are dangerous. But if Mr. Lloyd George had wished to make them he would have done better to cite the United States, where Government has no honours to bestow, and where there are the strongest political organisations.

The truth is that an Anglo-Saxon people will invariably divide itself into political parties, and provide all the necessary accompaniments for political campaigns. The instinct is in the race. It needs no "encouragement or stimulus"; on the contrary, the risk always is that political organisations may go too far, the only check being the force of public opinion. That is exactly what happened in the United States. Campaign funds became too large for the good of the country. The chief contributors were the great bankers and manufacturers, who thought the rule of one or the other party would make for national prosperity and their own personal profit. Naturally, there was sometimes a little confusion about where the latter ended and the former began. But there is certainly nothing more reprehensible in a manufacturer contributing money to keep in power politicians in whose views he concurs than in an Englishman making

a payment to his own party in return for a title. The problem was solved by legislation compelling the publication of all amounts subscribed for party purposes, with the names of the subscribers. That is what should be done in this country.

The experience of the United States shows that such a law does not have the effect of destroying party organisations, of producing the condition of "political chaos," the prospect of which affrights Mr. Lloyd George. Practical politics, which within certain bounds are useful and necessary, would flourish and are not unduly stunted. There is nothing dishonourable in a man of means giving ten thousand pounds for the legitimate propagation of the views he holds any more than there is in giving one guinea to his local party organisation. How the money is used—whether properly or otherwise—is an absolutely different branch of the question. But I believe that in that respect there is in this country a minimum of corruption, direct or indirect, in political life.

In the debate in the House of Commons there was a constant harping on the theme that a man should not be debarred from receiving a title because he subscribed to a party fund. I imagine that the only people who ever set up that contention were those who wanted to knock it down. The obvious point is that one should not be given a title only *because* he has made a subscription—or will do so. Compulsory publication of the origin of party funds would prevent that abuse, and would not interfere with either merited bestowals of honours or proper contributions.

A man's claim to a title is entirely too flimsy when it is so indiscernible that it would be entirely obscured

in the eyes of the country should it be known that he had helped his party financially. In proper cases that would not be so. For instance, imagine that the late Lord Rhondda had made an important contribution to the party funds at the general election of 1910—and I purposely take such an illustration because Lord Rhondda was for many years actively interested in politics, because I am unaware whether or not he ever gave a penny to such funds, and because if he did so, with his means and various interests, it would have been an entirely proper proceeding. If that subscription had been known at the time, if it was the custom, enforced by law, that such subscriptions should be made public, who would ever have suggested that his peerage was conferred in return for it? No one; for the simple reason that Lord Rhondda rendered services to the State which clearly entitled him to the honour. He had merited it even if he had not helped his party in a pecuniary way; while his having done so would not have rendered him unfit.

Obviously, the objection is to honours being given to someone whose only claim is that he has paid money. But it is possible to avoid that, and yet to get from supporters, whether having titles or not, sufficient for party purposes; and at the same time to create peers, all of whom have qualifications, which are admitted, irrespective of whether or not they aid their party.

Mr. Lloyd George refused to appoint a select committee having the power to force witnesses to give evidence on oath, upon the ground that the subject in question was a Royal prerogative. Technically he

may have been correct. In any event the decision was sound; there is nothing to be gained in exposing a murky past. But he might have been asked to explain why the Government had not only broken the undertaking it gave some years earlier, but they cynically acknowledged that it continued the former practice and even actually defended it. In 1917, if I remember aright, the Government promised, first, that a public statement should always be made of the reason for which an honour was conferred (an entirely innocuous and useless condition); and, secondly, that before the Prime Minister made a recommendation to the King, he would satisfy himself that no money payment was *directly or indirectly involved in the transaction*. But speaking in the House of Commons on July 17, 1922, Mr. Lloyd George said: "There was no Prime Minister, either of to-day or of the past, who had any knowledge, when names were submitted to him, who had contributed to the party funds and who had not. Prime Ministers judged upon the record of service submitted to them. Which of the persons contributed no Prime Minister had the slightest idea. (Laughter.) That was as it should be. (Laughter.) And for a very good reason. Whoever was recommending those names ought not to have his judgment biased one way or the other by those facts. The Prime Minister of the day ought not to be informed as to the names coming before him whether any or which of their holders had contributed to party funds."*

Undoubtedly that is one way of looking at the matter. Although the apparent force of the contention shrinks to its proper proportions when one

* The Times, July 18, 1922.

remembers that it is the Chief Whip's duty to take subscriptions into account in preparing the list, and that the fact is necessarily in the mind of any Prime Minister, when the list is placed before him. But what is more important is that it is absolutely impossible to reconcile this statement with the promise given by Mr. Lloyd George's Government in 1917, that before the Prime Minister made a recommendation to the King he would *satisfy himself* that no money was *directly or indirectly involved in the transaction*. There is a marked difference between closing one's eyes, shutting one's ears, and saying, "I mustn't be told," and satisfying oneself in the way indicated.

The appointment of a Royal Commission may temporarily shelve an unpleasant subject. But unless the publication of political subscriptions is enforced by law, the traffic will continue ; and, apart from exciting rancour and envy, and giving an exhibition of human hypocrisy, it would seem that there can be no reform until Parliament is prepared to demand that.

Mr. Lloyd George sheltered himself behind the Royal Prerogative. "Prerogative" is too big a word to use when the Sovereign's veto on the ground of lack of personal worth is overridden by the reply that the honour must be granted because it is a reward for political services. Certainly that veto was used, even in respect to rewards wanted for political followers, as late as the days of Queen Victoria—perhaps later. For the fact that there has since been an infringement on the Royal Prerogative—that it has become a fiction—Mr. Lloyd George is himself partly responsible.

Much more serious is the way in which Mr. Lloyd

George infringed on the prerogatives of Parliament, first, by largely escaping from its control ; secondly, by the practical abolition of the collective responsibility of the Cabinet. The former transgression might be considered the more important of the two were it not possibly of a more temporary character. During the war the Government was not always able to take the House of Commons into its confidence so fully as it had been accustomed and obliged to do before 1914. It was necessary that during that period the Cabinet should be more free from control than in normal times. But the power thus acquired was open to abuse, and has been abused. That might have been foreseen. In the exercise of power *l'appétit vient en mangeant*. The temptation was great, and all the more so since the obstacles in the way were trifling. For in 1919 Mr. Lloyd George, unassailable in his reputation as saviour of the nation, and possibly replete with the confidence inspired by the then recent victory, met a House of Commons which contained an overwhelming majority of his followers, and also was largely composed of new members.

In the first two years he paid little attention to the House (it is true that part of that time he was in Paris) and sometimes even treated it with a minimum of courtesy. But such matters right themselves with time. The approach of a general election and, above all, the retirement of Mr. Bonar Law, compelled Mr. Lloyd George to be more regular in his attendance, and at least to make an occasional show of deference. Nevertheless, the late Parliament had less influence than any within the memory of living men, and the late Prime Minister

(I forbear to say the Cabinet) has more. Yet it was difficult to feel much sympathy for the House of Commons. Upon the whole, it did not deserve a better fate, for the majority could almost always be cowed into abandoning any stand by the threat of an appeal to the country.

But, not satisfied with having appropriated some of the puissance of Parliament, Mr. Lloyd George also reduced his own colleagues to ciphers, and made himself an absolute master, except when he found on his path someone who would not allow himself to be pushed on one side—like Mr. Churchill. Formerly, although a Prime Minister's views possibly always had greater weight than those of any other member of his Cabinet, yet they were not decisive. Mr. Gladstone's political career ended exactly when it did because he disagreed with the majority of the Cabinet upon the question of the Naval Estimates. But formerly every member of the Government had some responsibility for its acts, and therefore nothing was done until every member of the Government had been consulted.

Mr. Lloyd George changed all that. He evolved a system whereby important questions were decided by a group of Ministers. As he himself selected who was to deal with each matter, and as he had a Coalition Cabinet from which to make his choice, it is obvious that he could more or less certainly ensure that the policy he personally favoured would be adopted. The rest of the Cabinet was sometimes committed without having even had an opportunity to express an opinion. There was no secret about this method of absolute personal government which Mr. Lloyd George created.

Everyone knew that collective Cabinet responsibility no longer existed. But a formal confirmation was produced by Mr. Montagu's compulsory resignation as Secretary of State for India. There was some force in his complaint to the House of Commons that a Government "which flouted above all other Governments the doctrine of Cabinet responsibility," should have advanced that as the reason for getting rid of him.

While he was only raising a corner of the curtain when, speaking at the Cambridge Liberal Club on March 11th, 1922, he said: "It is a commonplace of the political history of Europe—the confusion between No. 10, Downing Street and the Foreign Office about foreign affairs. Cabinet responsibility! Why, ladies and gentlemen, the thing is a joke. It is a pretext. We have been governed by a great genius—a dictator who has called together from time to time conferences of Ministers, men who had access to him day and night, leaving out those who, like myself, found it sometimes impossible to get to him for days together. He has come to epoch-making decisions, and over and over again it is notorious that members of his Cabinet had no knowledge of such decisions, and if such knowledge came to them, it came at a time when they could make no effective use of their knowledge."

The picture is strictly accurate. Though, if anyone retains office under such conditions, he can expect little pity if the "dictator" one day chooses to oust him.

But if Mr. Lloyd George did not care to divide his authority according to his precedent with his own

colleagues, he liked to have assistants who were absolutely dependent upon him. It was the Cabinet Secretariat which was used for this purpose. If Mr. Lloyd George could find anyone who could be useful to him personally, if anyone got his confidence and, temporarily, some influence over him, he was put in the Secretariat. There he was not responsible to Parliament, was uncontrolled by any departmental Chief, and he might well have more influence than any Cabinet Minister. For it was the Secretariat which usurped the functions of other branches of the Government, and notably of the Foreign Office.

That some such body may have been necessary during the war may be accepted without discussion. Its maintenance and growth since then, both in numbers and power, is entirely another matter. When its continuance was attacked in the House of Commons in June, 1922, the gist of the defence was that it was merely a "recording and communicating department" (the words used by Mr. Lloyd George), and that it rendered valuable services in preparing agenda for Cabinet meetings, and in keeping a record of what took place at those meetings.

Before Mr. Lloyd George began to concentrate all power in his own hands the long-established custom was that no one except a Cabinet Minister should be present at a Cabinet meeting unless, as occasionally happened, it was a Government official summoned to give certain information. After the meetings the Prime Minister wrote with his own hand a letter to the Sovereign giving an account of the proceedings; and a copy of that letter, made by the secretary, was the only permanent record. Sometimes a Minister left

Downing Street not quite sure what had taken place. Indeed, that happened more than once to the late Duke of Devonshire (then Lord Hartington), whose mental processes were more sure than speedy.

The desirability of obviating misunderstandings which might thus arise, and also the great increase in the number of Cabinet Councils, made a reasonable case for a more modern system. But the point is that the Secretariat was much more than a recording department. The figures speak for themselves. In 1917 the Estimates showed that the Secretariat numbered nineteen. By 1922 the staff had been increased to one hundred and fourteen, costing the country £32,048 annually. It is thus evident that although this system originated during the war, it had its greatest growth afterwards; while it is apparent that there was no such increase of Cabinet meetings between 1917 and 1922 as to warrant such an extension.

But Mr. Chamberlain, in defending the new system, disclosed what had really happened. He admitted that "the whole of the League of Nations work is under the charge of an official of the Foreign Office, seconded to the Cabinet Secretariat for that particular purpose." In other words, in plain language, the League of Nations work (which one would naturally think appertained to the Foreign Office) is controlled by the Secretariat; for a Foreign Office official, seconded to that body, belongs to it in every sense except that he may possibly figure on the Foreign Office estimates. Apparently Mr. Chamberlain himself thought that the transaction needed some explanation. For he added that, "the reason why it is dealt with in this way is because the Dominions, whom

the work intimately concerned, preferred to correspond with the Cabinet Office." Unfortunately, that rather weakened Mr. Chamberlain's case. For clearly the reason why the Dominions prefer to deal with the Secretariat is that they, like the rest of the world, know that it has more power than the Foreign Office! For what Mr. Montagu told his Cambridge constituents was absolutely correct. In every Chancellery throughout Europe our Foreign Office was known to possess no influence.

At the Wilhelmstrasse all wanted to know what Mr. Lloyd George and his Secretariat were doing. One never heard of Lord Curzon, nor was Lord d'Abernon thought to keep in very close touch with him. At the Quai d'Orsay much more interest was displayed in what was said by the Prime Minister's favourite than in the opinion expressed by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. For at the majority of the innumerable conferences the latter played little or no part. At the London meeting in August, 1922, the Foreign Ministers of France, Italy, and Belgium were present. But Mr. Lloyd George had with him only the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Minister of War.*

Moreover, the very men who in part composed the Secretariat prove that it is no mere communicating Department. Several examples might be given, but I will take that of Mr. Philip Kerr (perhaps the best known of all), so as not to refer to anyone now in the Government service. Mr. Kerr is not either by position,

* I do not remember whether Lord Curzon had then returned to London after his illness; but, if not, there was an active Minister of Foreign Affairs, who had a few days before issued a famous note.

education, or instinct a recording clerk. He had a distinguished career at Oxford (if I remember aright, he was a Fellow of All Souls') ; he is heir to an ancient title, he is in a material position which in a large degree enables him to do as he likes, and he has a pronounced taste for political intrigue. I have recorded elsewhere the misfortune he encountered when, during the Peace Conference, he attempted to bring Mr. Lloyd George and the Bolsheviks together.

Mr. Kerr's influence in the conduct of foreign affairs was well known both at home and abroad. The strong views which he sincerely held were no secret. Yet when Parliament tried to supervise his actions it was met by the simple statement that he belonged to Mr. Lloyd George's Secretariat. No person not occupying any political position did so much to make bad feeling between England and France. No person is more responsible for the mistrust in which the French came to hold Mr. Lloyd George ; and when the latter wondered at the lack of confidence which Europe now showed in his actions, he might have found some of the cause in the proceedings of Mr. Kerr and others of his immediate entourage.

Mr. Kerr was, I believe, the member of the Secretariat who, in 1920, when the French occupied Frankfurt and other German towns, ventured to give to the Press a semi-official statement that all the Allies entirely disapproved of what France had done. Apart from the fact that this sudden desire for publicity was suspicious, the communication itself was inaccurate. For Belgium at once showed her approval by placing her railways at the disposal of the French Government ; while neither Italy nor Japan had

expressed any opinion whatever. It is noteworthy that it was not the Foreign Office, but the Secretariat, which took this indiscreet and reprehensible action in an important question of foreign policy ; although, a few days later, in reply to a direct question in the House of Commons, Mr. Bonar Law evaded an avowal by asking that he might not be pressed to say whether or not the Government was responsible for it.

More recently, Mr. Kerr's utterances in the United States have called forth much emphatic and unfavourable comments. As he no longer belonged to the Cabinet Secretariat, he did not necessarily express Mr. Lloyd George's opinions. But his past connection with the late Prime Minister was so intimate and so widely known that his pronouncements must have embarrassed the latter, unless, indeed, they had his approbation.

Mr. Kerr is reported to have said in an interview that "Trotsky will go down in history as one of the world's greatest organisers." While speaking before the Political Institute at Williamstown, Mass., on August 12th, 1922, he first absolved the Kaiser from any culpability in respect to the war, and then made various statements which greatly surprised his audience. The effect produced is reflected in the following leading article which appeared in the *New York Tribune* three days later. "We do not imagine that a great many Americans will be influenced by such talk. The alarming feature of it is the well-known fact that Mr. Kerr was Mr. Lloyd George's secretary through the thick of the war, and stood at his elbow at Versailles. He does not come to America as spokesman for his former chief, but one cannot

help wondering how Mr. Lloyd George regards such a plea. Has Mr. Kerr always held these interesting views? If so, what did he think of Mr. Lloyd George's 'Hang-the-Kaiser' period of eloquence? The puzzled observer cannot but go further, and wonder what Mr. Lloyd George thinks about his own acts and words. Does England really wish to make the Germans pay or not? It seems about time that Mr. Lloyd George stopped sparring for position and gave solid proof of where he stands."

When pleading in favour of the Secretariat, Mr. Lloyd George suggested that the old system had plunged the world into war. Presumably that remark was not meant to be taken seriously. For the Secretariat method is much more likely to precipitate than it is to prevent a war; what it actually did was to create confusion and to breed bad feeling in respect to the conduct of foreign affairs. The work formerly done by the Foreign Office—and which is properly within the scope of the Foreign Office—was divided amongst at least two, and possibly (as Lord Robert Cecil alleged) three, departments. But the more potent of these was the Secretariat. All important initiations could be traced to that source. Mr. Montagu was speaking well within the facts when he said: "It is a commonplace of the political history of Europe—the confusion between No. 10, Downing Street and the Foreign Office about foreign affairs." The natural result was that not only the Dominions (as Mr. Chamberlain admitted), but other Governments preferred to look to the Secretariat. It was felt that Mr. Lloyd George had made foreign policy his personal preserve to the exclusion of the Foreign Office.

Whatever the advantage of the system, it had the obvious disadvantage of leaving other Governments with the impression that behind and above the Foreign Office was a force which was really the decisive one. There was no Chancellery in Europe where it is not known that Lord Curzon had absolutely no voice in deciding the foreign policy of Great Britain, and that he was even often obliged to follow a policy with which he did not agree. There is, for instance (and it is only one instance out of several which might be cited) every reason to believe that the late Sir Henry Wilson was right, as he generally was in his facts, when on May 2nd he said, "Can anyone tell me why Lloyd George backed the Greeks? I do not know, and I am going to ask him as soon as I get a chance. I know that it was not by the advice of the War Office. We were always dead against it. I know that it was not by the advice of George Nathaniel Curzon, or the British Ambassador at Constantinople, or Lord Reading—that, at least, has come out." *

Moreover, the very fact that Mr. Lloyd George's view constantly changed (any nine months' record of the utterances he made upon the question of France and Germany composed an extraordinary compilation of inconsistencies and contradictions) added to the general irritation. Naturally, there was no reason why Mr. Lloyd George should not have been his own Foreign Minister. There are even reasons why it might have been advisable. Nowadays, most Prime Ministers take that office for themselves. Before

* Interview with a *Daily Mail* reporter which was published only on September 1st, 1922. Sir Henry Wilson, in speaking of Lord Curzon, often said, "George Nathaniel Curzon."

1914, the French Président du Conseil was nearly always also Minister of the Interior. But since the war the centre of power has shifted from the Place Beauvau to the Quai d'Orsay. If Mr. Lloyd George had adopted that course openly there would have been less ill-feeling abroad and less confusion at home. Moreover, if the Foreign Office is now again put in possession of its proper field of authority (and not either ignored or treated as a *bouc émissaire*), it will facilitate a return to a due measure of parliamentary supervision.

But not content with having reduced the Foreign Office to a cipher at home, Mr. Lloyd George consolidated his personal control over foreign policy by the system of diplomacy by conference. In these meetings Lord Curzon generally either has not been present or was entirely effaced as an active factor; while at the same time all diplomatists (for whom, as a class, Mr. Lloyd George has always had a certain contempt) were relegated to the background. Before showing the actual workings of the new diplomacy and criticising its rather barren results, it is only fair to quote what one of the foremost and ablest exponents has said in its praise. Sir Maurice Hankey, in a paper, "Diplomacy by Conference," which he read at a meeting at the British Institute of International Affairs on November 2nd, 1920,* mentioned that since 1914 he had attended 488 International meetings (the number must be well over 500 by now). After describing the way business is conducted at these gatherings, Sir Maurice said: "To sum up—my personal experience, for what it is worth, is that the most

* The British Institute of International Affairs has since published this paper in pamphlet form.

important elements of success in diplomacy by conference are elasticity of procedure, small numbers, informality, mutual acquaintance, and, if possible, *personal friendship among the principals*, a likely perspective between secrecy in deliberation and publicity in results, reliable secretaries and interpreters. It can hardly be doubted that diplomacy by conference has come to stay. It can, of course, be urged that a system which was necessary to meet the tremendous pressure of war business is no longer required in quieter times, and that it would be better to revert to the old system of diplomacy, born in times when distances were great and movements slow and often hazardous.

"This view leaves out of account the shrinkage of the world and the enormous increase in the volume and complexity of international business. Such questions can only be settled in conference by persons who have their hand on the pulse of the political conditions and currents of thought in their respective countries; who have at their immediate disposal all the technical knowledge which Governments possess; who know how far they can persuade their fellow-countrymen to go in the direction of compromise; and who, inasmuch as they have to defend their policy before their respective Parliaments, are alone in a position to make real concessions. In former days, when the final responsibility rested with a Sovereign or a Government, these matters could be entrusted to an Ambassador. Nowadays, when Governments are really responsible to Parliament, elected on the widest franchise, it is no longer advisable to rely entirely on intermediaries."

Sir Maurice was good enough to add that there is some field of usefulness left for the Diplomatic Service, since it may still transact "an enormous mass of important intermediate business proceeding or arising out of, or independent of, conferences." Nevertheless, the effect of his somewhat self-complacent proposal not only tends to make Ambassadors merely messengers at the other end of the telephone wire (to some extent they had become that before 1914), but also to oust the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, unless, indeed, he happens to be Prime Minister also. That is exactly what has happened in England during recent years.

But the main objection to Sir Maurice's statement is that it is entirely misleading. He bases his defence of the conference system upon his own presumption that Governments are now more directly responsible to Parliament. If his words mean anything at all, they mean that under that system, as distinguished from former diplomatic procedure, a Government can and will tell Parliaments "elected on the widest franchise" more than they otherwise could or would. If he had limited his contention to saying that a Prime Minister who conducts the negotiations himself can report them more fully, and, perhaps, even more accurately, than if he had acted through intermediaries, he would have been on safe ground.

But what has happened in practice? At no period during the last half-century have foreign affairs so closely touched the everyday life of the country. At no time during the last generation at least has it been so difficult for the House of Commons to obtain reasonable information about

what was being done. Time and again Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues used every parliamentary art in order to avoid or to delay telling anything to Parliament—and thus to the country. Sometimes they were eventually forced to do so; but more often than not it was only unwillingly and after a struggle. One does not have to be in sympathy with Mr. Wilson's dangerous and foolish conception of what he called "open diplomacy" (which, by the way, he himself soon abandoned in practice), in order to reject Sir Maurice Hankey's statement as having no foundation in fact.

The part of his plea which is more accurate, but which is also more objectionable, is that wherein he admits that politicians in conference will shape their course according to the "conditions and currents of thought in their respective countries." That is frank advocacy of opportunism as distinguished from holding fast to any principles. Presumably no one becomes Prime Minister unless the country approves of what he promises he will do. Certainly he has no right to commit the country to anything to which he knows it is absolutely opposed. But he is not forced to alter his views according to every variation in public opinion. If so, there is no use in making any pre-election promises. It would be much simpler to issue an address saying, "If you return me and my party, I will do whatever you want from time to time."

Reduced to the last analysis, the only alternative is for a Prime Minister to have some principles to which he sticks, and to resign when he finds that the country no longer agrees with him. But an almost

invincible repugnance to resignation is the earmark of the twentieth-century politician.

However, it is simple to see how all this works in practice, and Sir Maurice Hankey must be well aware of the facts. After months of debate, when the Treaty of Versailles was given to the German delegates (without, it may be remarked, having ever been shown to the representatives of various allied countries, so that they might intelligently "defend their policy before their respective Parliaments" in the manner so dear to Sir Maurice Hankey), Mr. Lloyd George got into a panic. He was afraid that Germany would not sign. At a series of meetings he did his utmost to persuade Wilson and Clémenceau to change the Treaty by giving better terms to Germany in respect to territorial occupation, reparations, and the Upper Silesian question. Clémenceau and Wilson (who finally ceded only in respect to a plebiscite in Upper Silesia) told him more than once (a record of these conversations has been published, and its authenticity is not denied) that if he contended that the decisions at which they arrived at were unjust, they were willing to reconsider the matters to which he referred. But Mr. Lloyd George's feverish exhortations rested solely on two grounds; first, that Germany would not sign, which left Clémenceau unmoved; and, secondly, that in the final result he himself would lose votes in Great Britain, through doing what he thought was right.

The line of demarcation is, therefore, clear—thanks in part to Sir Maurice Hankey. It is a choice between politicians, with a lack of experience and a degree of ignorance which obliges them to depend upon others for even elementary knowledge, making treaties simply

in view of the next general election, and trained diplomats, who are bound to carry out the instructions of their own Foreign Office, but who have no personal interests involved. They can freely expound and support their own principles, for all they have to look forward to is not a general election, but retirement upon a moderate pension. Human nature being what it is, I am inclined to think that the latter are likely to have a more untrammelled sense of duty.

Undoubtedly, the Foreign Office was unprepared for the war, was too old-fashioned in its methods, and made many mistakes both at home and abroad. But the same may be said with equal truth of the War Office, the Admiralty, and other Government Departments. The reverse side of the picture is that our Foreign Office has, for that period, a record which does not compare unfavourably with that which can be shown by any other country. It would be difficult to find a man better suited to be permanent Under-Secretary than Lord Hardinge, who returned to that post in May, 1916, upon the retirement of Lord Nicholson, whose ability was unquestionable.

Abnormal circumstances demanded that at certain times personalities who were not of the *carrière* should be used for service abroad ; and the work done by Lord Derby in France, and by Lord Reading in the United States, proved in each instance the wisdom of the choice made. But if one turns to the list of those who got their training in the Foreign Office, one instinctively remembers that Lord Bertie was a great and far-seeing diplomatist. The story of the war might have been unpleasantly different had not Sir

Rennel Rodd been at Rome during one critical period, while I venture to think that what was accomplished by Lord Granville and others who might be named could hardly have been done by anyone who had not their experience. Sir Alan Johnston was removed from the Hague, but it was no reflection upon Sir Walter Townley to say that the former filled the difficult position equally well. It is true that Sir Arthur Hardinge was unable to cope with the situation at Madrid. Nowhere was German intrigue more active. The moving spirit of the German Embassy was the Military Attaché, who had many active assistants. The atmosphere created by a vigorous campaign in a society which was already divided in its sympathies was not one suited to the temperament of Sir Arthur Hardinge, whose talents were wasted in Spain.

It is less easy to form any definite judgment about Sir George Buchanan. He still remains the diplomatic puzzle of the war. But whichever way his conduct may be viewed, it certainly demolishes the theory that all the progeny of our Foreign Office are torpid and unenterprising. My notes for months record the complaints of many Frenchmen and some Englishmen about the alleged tendencies of Sir George Buchanan ; and I recollect dining with M. Jean Cruppi (a former Minister of Foreign Affairs and to-day a Senator) when this was discussed with some animation by those present.* It was currently said that the British Embassy took its views from a young man who was then British Consul at Moscow (Lockhart), and whose

* The other memory of that dinner which rests in my mind is the conversation of " M. le Premier," as it is the custom to call the President of the Cour de Cassation—M. Monier, one of the wittiest of men, whose end was tragic.

opinions were decidedly advanced.* The fact seems to have been that until circumstances later led to a disagreement with Sir George Buchanan, he had some influence owing to the fact that he spoke Russian with great facility, and was, therefore, considered to be able to obtain a certain knowledge of public opinion. An ambassador is always at some disadvantage in a country of which he does not know the language; and much more so in troublesome times in Russia, when it is essential to know what is taking place. I remember once getting a message to come to breakfast in Eaton Place with the late Sir Henry Wilson, and his then telling me that he was leaving that day for Petrograd with Lord Revelstoke and others, although on account of the way Lord Kitchener had met his death the Admiralty had insisted that it should not be publicly known. Upon his return he was rather hopeful about the situation, though much more indefinite than was his wont. When, after the Revolution, I referred to this, he said, "I could speak no Russian. You can never form a sound judgment upon what officials tell you."

Sir George Buchanan has himself given a partial account of his own attitude during that period. Speaking on March 25th, 1919, before the Edinburgh Philosophical Institute, he said: "I am accused by the Germans of having played an active part in the Revolution, and although I have more than once contradicted this ridiculous story, a new version of it has been recently circulated by some of the Russian *émigrés* in Scandinavia, to the effect that, acting under

* Later the name of an American, Robins, who had, I believe, some connection with the Red Cross, was generally mentioned.

instructions from my Government, I gave the revolutionary party my moral and financial support with the express purpose of leading Russia to perdition. No sane person is likely to credit such an infamous lie; and all true Russians who know my warm feelings for their country will believe me when I say that, even had my Government ever contemplated so suicidal a policy, I would have resigned rather than carry it out. So far from having promoted the Revolution, I had consistently tried to prevent it by urging the Emperor to steer a more Liberal course.

"In January, 1917, I made a supreme effort to persuade the Emperor of his danger. I told him how German agents were using those in his immediate entourage as their unconscious tools to induce him to pursue a reactionary policy. I implored him to dismiss Protopopoff and to regain the confidence of his people by selecting a Prime Minister whom they trusted. I had, I added, come to warn him, just as I should warn a friend whom I saw walking on a dark night along a path that ended in a precipice, and to beseech him to turn aside, before it was too late, from a path which would lead him to revolution and disaster, and to choose the road that would bring him to victory and peace both at home and abroad. Though he thanked me for having his interests at heart, the Emperor was too much under the influence of others to heed my warning, while he honestly believed that it was his duty to hand down the autocracy which he had inherited from his ancestors intact to his son."*

* This conversation took place in the middle of January, 1917. See Colonel Repington's *After the War Diary*, p. 17.

Such is Sir George's view of the course he took. It is only fair to give the opinion of his adversaries, although I am bound to add that I do not think either accurate. But those who, to use his own words, accuse Sir George Buchanan are neither the Germans nor the Russian *émigrés* in Scandinavia. The strongest and most definite charge has been made by the Princess Paley, the widow of the late Duke Paul, who was the only surviving uncle of the late Czar. The time is January, 1917, and the reference is to the very audience of which the Ambassador's account has already been quoted: "So the month of January passed, but it can be said that matters got worse every day. Even the newspapers, despite the censure, made clear the bitter discontent. The revolutionary propaganda amongst the reserve regiments increased daily. The British Embassy, acting under the orders of Lloyd George, had become a hotbed of propaganda. The Liberals, Prince Lwoff, Miloukoff, Rodzianke, Maklakoff, Goutchkoff, etc., were constantly to be found there.

"It was at the British Embassy that it was decided to abandon legal methods and to enter on the path of revolution. It must be said that in all that Sir George Buchanan, the English Ambassador at Petrograd, was assuaging his personal rancour. The Emperor did not like him, and became more and more cold as the English Ambassador made friends with his personal enemies. The last time that Sir George requested an audience the Emperor received him standing, without asking him to sit. Buchanan swore to avenge himself, and as he was very intimate with a grand ducal couple, he had for the moment the

idea of making a palace revolution. But the events were beyond anything he had foreseen." *

There is nothing very new in these assertions, but it is the first time they have appeared in print over a name which carries any weight or authority. The young grand ducal couple in question were the Grand Duke Cyril (who has recently issued a manifesto practically claiming the throne as head of the Romanoffs) and his wife, who is a daughter of the late Duke of Edinburgh. It is the Grand Duke Cyril to whom M. Paléologue refers when, in his *Memoirs*, he speaks of a member of the Romanoff family who exhibited a somewhat shameful speed in renouncing his allegiance and publicly professing his devotion to the Russian Revolution. But the Princess Paley's recriminations must be taken with some reserve. The suggestion that Sir George Buchanan was actuated by personal spite is not worth consideration. Nor will any sane person believe that Buchanan wanted a revolution, though probably he feared one and thought that a change of régime would prevent such a catastrophe. And that was exactly where his mistake began. It is true that he consorted with Liberals and was doubtless glad that the power passed into their hands. That view coincides with his own account of how he tried to persuade the Emperor to choose Liberal Ministers and his deduction that it was unwise to want to preserve the autocracy. But he did not realise that the Liberal leaders, who were only miserable theorists, were too futile either to create a current or to stem the tide; and that their advent would be the first

* See "Souvenirs de Russie," *Revue de Paris*, June 1, 1922.

step towards a revolution, which was bound to be destructive.

Now that the Czarism belongs to a past which already begins to seem distant on account of all that has happened since, it is difficult to realise that only a few years ago a Russian revolution was generally thought to be something of which we should often hear but never see. The belief that reverence for "the little father" and other similar ideas were strongly implanted in the hearts of the peasant population (as they probably were) seemed to protect the whole situation; and one little foresaw that a band of a few thousand determined men would absolutely dominate more than as many millions. A few months before the Revolution I received a copy of a letter written by a personage in Russia (which, if I remember aright, passed through the hands of M. Gabriel Hanotaux), the gist of which was: "You will doubtless be surprised by the frequent changes of Government which we are having. But the fact is that Miloukoff is attacking each successive one because he is determined to drag the Emperor off the throne. I believe that he will succeed. But the result may be different from what he thinks—chaos." *

While I did not attach any great importance to the letter, I took it (largely on account of the source from which it came to me) to Colonel Amery, who was in charge of some information service long before the Ministry of Information was founded. In leaving it with him I mentioned that, while I had no near knowledge of Russian affairs, I could not believe that a

* I am not quoting textually, but am simply giving the import of the letter.

revolution was likely, which within two months proved to be a singularly bad prophecy.

But whether Sir George Buchanan was right or whether he was wrong (if a true account is ever written it will probably show that, like most human beings, he fell between the two), he maintained the traditions of the Foreign Office, which gives a training which does not sap natural initiative.

In the House of Commons debate regarding his Secretariat, Mr. Lloyd George referred scornfully to some use which had been made of the word "amateur." He scoffingly said: "There is a great deal of nonsense talked about amateurs. It is not a question of whether you are an amateur or an expert. It is a question of experience—experience of affairs, experience of men, experience of the world. It is the question of whether you have got the capacity to make the best of that experience. If you have not, then seventeen years do not make you an expert. If you have, you do not require as many years as that with the advice of the best experts in the world."

Undoubtedly, a man may have much experience and little or no capacity; then he is generally useless. Or he may have great capacity and be obliged to rely on others—"the best experts in the world"—for his experience. Mr. Lloyd George evidently thinks that the latter class is unassailable; he realises fairly enough that it is the one into which he himself naturally falls. But it also has its shortcomings, and I propose to show in the next chapter some of the errors into which a lack of "experience of the world" may lead those whose genius is indisputable. While the definition of an amateur in diplomatic negotiations is not

difficult to give, it is one who depends on his instinct, but is forced to depend on others for his knowledge.

From the facts which have been set forth it will be seen that Mr. Lloyd George showed every disposition to ignore Parliament, absorbed all the powers of the Cabinet, and demolished all collective Cabinet responsibility, and made foreign affairs his personal and private domain.

These are wide powers. How Mr. Lloyd George used them, and with what result to the country, is now generally known. But even if it had proved to be to the public advantage, the only explanation would have been the genius of Mr. Lloyd George.

But his successor might not have his genius. How would the system work then?

After all, Disraeli, Gladstone, and others suffered colleagues more or less gladly.

CHAPTER III

LLOYD GEORGE AND HAIG

IN *The Pomp of Power* I alluded several times to the difficulties which arose between the Government, and more particularly the Prime Minister, and Field-Marshal Haig in respect both to the conduct of military operations and the utilisation which should be made of the national resources as regards effectives : in other words, the man-power question. This contest was continuous and incessant from the day Mr. Lloyd George succeeded Mr. Asquith in December, 1916, until the end of hostilities. It was a constant struggle between the head of the Government and the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in the principal theatre of warfare. It ended without any definite result, leaving these adversaries holding the same positions as when it began. In reality that constituted a victory for Haig, since throughout he had necessarily been on the defensive, trying to parry and to counteract the violent and sometimes tortuous attacks which the redoubtable enemy launched against him from time to time.

At the outset it is only fair to state that the Prime Minister was not actuated by any personal motives. Certainly Mr. Lloyd George had little or nothing in common with Lord Haig. The stolid Scotsman's

lack of imagination irritated the impetuous Welshman. In his eyes this fault was in no way redeemed by the fact that Haig might be considered the perfect type of a British cavalry officer of twenty years ago. Indeed, he observed that our French friends were just a trifle too fond of saying that Haig was "*un parfait gentilhomme*" or "*un beau sabreur*," while ominously silent about his capacity as a strategist. Like Clémenceau, what Lloyd George wanted was a general who could win battles, irrespective of any personal considerations. He sincerely believed that someone more competent than Haig might be found; that that was the sole reason for his machinations (which, upon the whole, is not too strong a word to use) against the Commander-in-Chief on the Western Front.

The obvious query is why, if he held that opinion, he did not simply dismiss Haig and supplant him by some general in whom he had more confidence. It is easy to answer that question. He considered that Haig's popularity in the country and the support which he might obtain in the House of Commons were such that he could not take the step without risking the safety of his own Government. In brief, he would have treated Haig differently—so differently that he would have been ousted from the High Command long before the Armistice—had he felt free to act according to his own beliefs without being influenced by political considerations.

This explanation of (I do not say that it is an excuse for) Mr. Lloyd George's proceedings is directly substantiated by an incident to which I have referred elsewhere. At a time when he wished

to subordinate Haig to Nivelle, he arranged with a member of the French Government that at a certain meeting the latter should urge that course, to which the British consent would be given after some discussion ; and in making that arrangement he specifically stated that he was obliged to act in that way because Haig's strength in the country was such that he did not himself dare take the responsibility of proposing a measure of which he really approved.

The details of the various steps taken by Mr. Lloyd George to get rid of Haig without himself running any risk are at least curious. But no less curious are the precautions which were taken by certain others, and especially by Marshal Pétain, to frustrate the Prime Minister's attempts to make use of them in his manœuvres against the British Commander-in-Chief. I venture to think that what happened in one instance, at least, may still be unknown even to Mr. Lloyd George, while the general outline of these efforts is interesting as showing clearly the Prime Minister's view of the proper line of demarcation between the authority of the civil and military powers in time of war.

Indeed, on one occasion, Mr. Lloyd George laid down clearly and unequivocally the theory he held on this much-vexed question. In July, 1917, an Inter-Allied Conference was held at Downing Street, which is noteworthy both on account of its intrinsic importance and because of the singular way in which a solution was found of what threatened to be a serious disagreement.

The principal object of this meeting was to settle definitely the delicate question of Salonica, which, at

that time, was jeopardising the good relations between France and Great Britain ; and also that of the suggested dethronement and expulsion from Athens of Constantine, which the two Governments viewed in a very different light.

I believe that it is not generally known that towards the middle of 1917 the Government for a moment thought of entirely abandoning the Salonica expedition. It had reached this frame of mind as a result of the tenacious efforts and persistent pressure of General Robertson, whose whole strategy (which was, at that time, vigorously supported in the *Times* by Colonel Repington) might be summed up in this single idea—the concentration of all possible forces on the Western Front. The reason advanced by General Robertson in support of this theory was that since the Germans had their principal armies massed on the French Front, it was there that the Allies ought to attack with all their available troops, for, once those forces were destroyed, Germany would no longer be able to offer any resistance, and the war would be won. General Robertson thus applied, blindly, the well-known Napoleonic principle, “ Le premier objectif à poursuivre doit être la destruction des forces organisées de l'adversaire.” This principle holds true to this day—is eternally true. Moreover, like all good military principles, it is a simple rule of good sense. But where Robertson (and his faithful Repington) totally differed from the great master of the art of war was in its application to the situation as it was in 1916, and later to that which prevailed in 1917 ; in the manner of determining what were the best means

that is the most rapid and the least costly, of destroying the enemy forces.

It may, I think, be fairly suggested that General Robertson seemed to forget that the Emperor had also formulated two other principles which touched directly the mode of execution of the one above quoted: first, to engage everywhere in order to get a clear idea of the whole situation; and, secondly, to discover the weakest point in the enemy's armour, and to apply on that weak point the maximum of force to disorganise his system.

In other words, it is necessary first to try to read the enemy's plan, to decide what is the least solid part, and to act by opposing strength to weakness. Probably the strategic horizon of Napoleon would have been somewhat larger than that of General Robertson, and he would not have limited his inspection to the Western Front, which constituted only a fraction of the world-battle, but would have brought within the scope of his penetrating glance the Italian Front, the Macedonian Front, the Rumanian-Russian Front, the Palestine Front, and the Mesopotamian Front. For, in fact, the real battle was between the Allies and the Central Powers, and not only between France and England on the one side, and Germany on the other.

The front extended not, as General Robertson appeared to think, from the North Sea to Switzerland, but from the North Sea to the Euphrates and to the Tigris. If the Napoleonic principle was to be acted upon faithfully and in its integrity, it was upon this immense strategic chess-board that it was necessary to search for and to find the most feeble

point. But nobody would think of contending that the Western Front was that weak point. On the contrary, it was the strongest part of the whole enemy's system. It was there that they had concentrated the greater part of their troops ; it was there that they had constructed the most formidable defensive works ; it was there that they had made a barrier, in useless attacks upon which we lost hundreds of thousands of men without any compensating results ; and it was there, and there only, in consequence of what was a total miscomprehension of the Napoleonic principle, that General Robertson thought that a successful decision was to be found.

No one will have forgotten the interminable discussions which took place at this period as to whether or not it was possible to pierce this solidly organised enemy front. One day, when this question was being discussed in the presence of Marshal (then General) Pétain, someone asked him his opinion. With his imperturbable calmness, and the humour which, under a glacial exterior, is always his, Pétain replied : " Tout ce que j'ai pu arriver à déterminer dans cette affaire, c'est qu'on peut vous diviser en trois catégories. La première, ce sont 'les trouistes,' et celle comprend ceux qui pensent que la trouée est possible ; la deuxième catégorie, ce sont les 'anti-trouistes' et elle comprend ceux qui estiment que la trouée est impossible ; enfin la troisième catégorie, qui me paraît la plus nombreuse, ce sont les 'altrouistes,' et elle comprend ceux qui estiment que la trouée est possible, mais aiment mieux la voir réalisée par d'autres qu'eux-mêmes."

But whatever may be said of the weakness or the

narrowness of General Robertson's strategic conceptions, the fact remains that he had finally succeeded in persuading the British Cabinet of the uselessness of the Macedonian Front, although by a singular irony Fate willed it that it was exactly there the breach which led to the whole crumbling of the whole enemy system should later be made. The British Government had even officially notified the French Government of its intention to withdraw all the English divisions from Salonica. As without the English contingents it would have been impossible to hold against the Turkish-Bulgarian-German forces, this would have meant the total evacuation of the Macedonian Front. It would also have been an abandonment of the heroic Serbian army,* which had given such magnificent evidence of its determination to reconquer its country, of which, from its trenches, it could see the southern part. After having left it to its fate in 1915, this would have been a second and more cold-blooded desertion, and one which would probably have led to its surrender.

At the Conference England was represented by the entire War Cabinet; France by her Prime Minister (M. Ribot), Minister of War (M. Painlevé), and Minister of Munitions (M. Albert Thomas); while the Italian delegates were her Minister for Foreign Affairs, the severe but distinguished Baron Sonnino, and her Ambassador in London, the smiling Marquis Imperiali. All these personages were accompanied by military experts, of whom the most noticeable were General Robertson and General Foch.

* The Germans think that of all the troops they encountered on the various fronts the Serbians were the hardest and the most determined opponents,

The French had come decided that they would not under any pretext agree to the evacuation. Or, to be more exact, that was the stand of the French representative who bore the brunt of the battle—M. Painlevé. He had made up his mind to resign rather than agree to the English proposal. That venerable and diplomatic parliamentarian, M. Ribot, while also opposed to the evacuation, was more conciliatory. While M. Albert Thomas was, perhaps, too much the friend of Mr. Lloyd George (although, as will be seen later, he did not hesitate to criticise him) to offer any vigorous opposition. In any event, he took no active part in the debates.

The Italians did not seem to have any absolutely fixed opinion upon the subject, although, upon the whole, they appeared to be partisans of the evacuation, which would have given them back a division and would at the same time have entailed the destruction of the Serbian army.

The struggle between the English and the French was hotly contested. No one wanted to yield. There were moments when it seemed likely that the Conference would break up, and one in particular which caused M. Ribot to appeal for solidarity amongst the Allies by showing the deplorable effect upon the whole course of the war of such a serious disagreement.

M. Painlevé led the assault against the English position, attacking time after time. M. Thomas contented himself with being an amiably sceptical spectator. General Foch, whom no one consulted, was like a charger chafing at his bit. The scene on the English side recalled to one of those present Wellington's squares at Waterloo, calm and un-

breakable under the furious attacks of the French. Upon several occasions the English Ministers withdrew to consult between themselves. Each time they returned with the same decision: "We want to evacuate."

The Conference lasted for two days, being interrupted by a week-end, when Mr. Lloyd George and M. Painlevé disappeared. It was learned later that they had passed the Sunday together in a country house which the Prime Minister had at that period: but at the time nobody knew where M. Painlevé had gone, and M. Ribot, in a state of nervous agitation, was trying to discover the whereabouts of his lost War Minister. Although Mr. Lloyd George's French is decidedly limited, and M. Painlevé's English is equally restricted, yet when they returned to London an agreement had been reached. Mr. Lloyd George gave up the idea of evacuating Salonica upon the condition that first one, and then two, English divisions should be withdrawn.

It has been alleged that one of the reasons which caused Mr. Lloyd George to favour the evacuation of Salonica was that with the English divisions which would thus be set at liberty he intended to take Jerusalem as quickly as possible. In any event, it is undoubtedly true that that city had a strange fascination for him. The capture of Jerusalem in December, 1917, seemed to cause him more intense pleasure than the crumbling of the Hindenburg line in France, 1918.

M. Painlevé is proud, and justly proud, of what he accomplished at this time of great crisis, which he rightly esteems as one of his greatest personal successes during the war. On the other hand, M. Ribot is to this day not quite clear as to what took place—and how.

In the course of this memorable Conference the proceedings of General Sarrail, then commanding the Allied forces in Salonica, was naturally a subject of discussion. The British Government was entirely indisposed towards Sarrail, both on account of an unfavourable report upon him made by General Milne, who commanded the English forces at Salonica, as well as for other reasons.* While, on the other hand, Painlevé supported him, largely because he was the only truly Republican general. It seemed, however, that there was a tinge of fear in the benevolence with which the French Government treated him. It was probably this that led Mr. Lloyd George to define explicitly, in carefully-chosen words, for the benefit of the French, the relations which, in his opinion, ought to prevail between a Government and its Commanders-in-Chief in the different theatres of warfare. Adopting (doubtless without realising it) the celebrated formula which originated in Germany, "War is the continuation of politics with arms in one's hands," the Prime Minister laid down that the object of any war being a political one, it was the province of the Government to decide what that object should be. This having been clearly determined, it was still within the province of the Government to decide, on the one hand, the effort which the country should be asked to make to maintain that object, and, on the other hand, to decide what should be the points where the forces

* The Sarrail question later became so acute that it was said that, when Ambassador to France, Lord Derby on one occasion threatened to resign unless Sarrail was dismissed. However, Painlevé always insisted upon retaining him. On the other hand, it was one of the first matters to which Clémenceau gave his attention upon becoming Prime Minister, and a little more than a week later Sarrail was recalled.

obtained by such efforts should be used and the number which should be allotted to each point. When the Government had once reached a conclusion upon all these essential and vital questions, which were its concern alone, then, but then only, commenced the rôle of the Commanders-in-Chief. Each of them, having been given an objective and a certain proportion of the national forces and resources, should then be left absolutely free to choose his own means to reach that end.

Just as much as it was inadmissible that a general in command should meddle in the prerogatives and duties of the Government (this was generally taken as an allusion to Joffre), so it was equally indefensible that the Government should in any way whatever (and here the allusion to the Painlevé-Nivelle incident was even more apparent) intervene directly or indirectly in the execution of the operations, that being the exclusive domain of the Commander-in-Chief.

This exposition of principles, which Mr. Lloyd George exposed calmly, but in a fashion which carried conviction, made a strong impression upon all who were present, with the possible exception of the one foreign delegate, by whom, on account both of his political tendencies and his affinity with his friend, Mr. Lloyd George, it might have been expected to have been most appreciated. But during the few seconds of silence which followed Mr. Lloyd George's remarks, M. Albert Thomas, leaning towards his neighbour, murmured, "Tout cela, c'est un très beau discours de plus ; mais, comme toujours, aucune action ne suivra." In his double quality, as historian

and as socialist, M. Thomas, in listening to Mr. Lloyd George, must have recalled the precedent of Buonaparte in Italy, 1796-97, sharply putting in its place the French Government which wanted to act precisely as the Prime Minister had just said a Government should act, and the weakness of Paris in dealing with the Commander-in-Chief, which thus led directly to the dictatorship and to the Empire.

One is naturally moved to inquire whether, in his relations with Sir Douglas Haig, Mr. Lloyd George scrupulously observed the principles which he had thus so clearly and succinctly outlined for the guidance of others.*

Taken all in all, it must be said that he always conformed strictly to the letter of the rule which he professed. It is, I think, impossible to cite a single instance of his having interfered with the conduct of any operation†; any more than it is possible to convict Haig of ever having trenched on the province of the politicians.

But although Mr. Lloyd George's conduct towards Haig was in this respect impeccable, he could not prevent himself from forming a personal estimate about the Commander-in-Chief's ability and military talent. His judgment was naturally influenced (as it always is) by his sudden sympathies and antipathies, by his disconcerting changes of opinion in moments of

* Mr. Lloyd George undoubtedly thought that the French needed to have this lesson impressed upon them, for he had developed precisely the same theory at an inter-Allied meeting held in Paris after the failure of the Nivelle offensive. (See *The Pomp of Power*, p. 108.)

† This statement would have to be qualified if one were considering the conduct of the Government during the period prior to Mr. Lloyd George's Prime Ministership, the period which embraced Antwerp and Gallipoli.

exultation or of depression, and by the criticisms (not always disinterested) made by those who enjoyed his private confidence. It was in this way that the Prime Minister had always a definite, if not always a final or even an enlightened, opinion of the various Commanders-in-Chief. But in any event this method had, at least, the advantage of being based upon actual results as he saw and interpreted them. In that regard it was in marked and favourable contrast to the course adopted by the French Government in 1916-17, which might well have led to greater trouble than it did.

At that time a French Prime Minister or Minister of War who did not approve of a plan proposed by a Commander-in-Chief intervened directly to have it changed or modified in accordance with his own views or conceptions. The result was a frequent clash between the military chief and the Government, which led to confusion and to a conflict from which all emerged with diminished prestige, and which, besides, usually ended where it should have begun—by the dismissal of a general in whom the Government had no confidence.

But our system prohibited any political interference with a plan of operations. For that the Commander-in-Chief was given a free hand, and had to bear the sole responsibility. He and it alike were judged not before, but after the operation. Then, if the results were not such as the country had a right to expect, and if the measure of success was not in proportion to the sacrifice entailed, the general might be relieved of his command, which is what happened in Egypt and in Mesopotamia.

When Mr. Lloyd George became Prime Minister in

December, 1916, the war had lasted more than two years, and Haig had commanded the British forces in France since the end of 1915. The only operation of the first importance which Haig had undertaken during that period was the Battle of the Somme, fought in conjunction with the French under Foch. The result of this offensive was not such as to give Mr. Lloyd George a flattering opinion of Haig's ability. The attack was launched on July 1st, 1916, on the line Hébuterne-Foucaucourt, a distance of thirty-seven kilometres.

In the French *secteur*, Maricourt-Foucaucourt, twelve kilometres, it was crowned with complete success, and, as Ludendorff has admitted in his *Memoirs*, nearly pierced the German front. But in the English sector, Maricourt-Hébuterne, twenty-five kilometres, we sustained a disastrous check, and particularly our Left, where the Fourth Army (Rawlinson) suffered colossal losses. Moreover, by July 10th, the French Sixth Army (Fayolle) had advanced nine kilometres, while by July 12th, after unheard-of efforts and enormous casualties at the Bois de Trônes, the Bois de Mametz, and at Contalmaison, we had only taken the first German position, and had, on an average, progressed only from two to three kilometres.

The subsequent developments of the Battle of the Somme, until it was halted in the middle of November, although filled with magnificent exploits on the part of our troops, was not of a nature seriously to modify the judgment caused by the horrible losses of the earlier days. Lieutenant-Colonel Corda, an author whose statements are always entitled to the most serious consideration,

says in his work, *La Guerre Mondiale*, p. 180 : "Les troupes anglaises étaient trop épuisées pour continuer la lutte avec l'ampleur et l'énergie que demandait encore le Haut Commandement Français, lequel se rendait compte que l'ennemi était fortement ébranlé sur la Somme et qu'il ne fallait pas s'arrêter au moment où la situation générale de l'Entente exigeait, au contraire, que les succès déjà acquis fussent développés à plein."

It is undeniable that the full importance of the Battle of the Somme and its results can only be fairly estimated if it is contemplated from different angles, without forgetting the relief afforded to Verdun and the moral effect upon the German army. But it is by no means surprising that any Prime Minister should have been impressed chiefly by the fact that in return for formidable and unforeseen losses, which forced the country to consent to further sacrifices of men, as well as of money, it had only produced directly an entirely insignificant advance. Cambrai was not even recaptured. Mr. Lloyd George himself undoubtedly observed that as a result of the Battle of the Somme the French got rid of Joffre, tired of his costly mode of warfare, which did not seem to bring the final decision any nearer.

The events of 1917 were not such as to change the unfavourable opinion regarding Haig's capabilities which Mr. Lloyd George had formed in the preceding year. That opinion was shown clearly when at Calais, and later, after Haig's spirited protest, at London, he was mainly responsible for Haig being subordinated to Nivelle, whose lucidity in explaining how he proposed to achieve the success of which he

was so confident made an extremely favourable impression upon the War Cabinet. For although Mr. Lloyd George did not propose that Nivelle should be given the supreme command, yet he either instigated the French to suggest it or, at least, had agreed with their view, and secretly promised that he would eventually cede.

The spring offensive, begun by the British at Arras and Lens on April 9th, and by the French on the Aisne on April 16th, resulted in an unfortunate repetition of the Battle of the Somme. Although the tactics were entirely different, the strategic conception was so extravagant that it was inevitable that the hopes aroused should be disappointed; while, as a matter of fact (and partly because the tactics as planned were abandoned), the outcome was a disastrous check, which in France nearly precipitated a national catastrophe. This led to the replacement of Nivelle by Pétain, in circumstances which I have recounted elsewhere.* The English part of the operation was, indeed, conducted in a more scientific manner and more in accordance with the forces which were available than was the French. But, when all credit had been given for that, it still remained painfully evident that what was achieved even by our troops was far from being proportionate to the sacrifices entailed. It was this battle which finally convinced the Prime Minister that neither the French nor the British armies on the Western Front had the leaders which their valour deserved, and that is the only reasonable explanation of the steps which he subsequently took. Mr. Lloyd George's natural vivacity, his quick in-

* See *The Pomp of Power*, Chapter IV.

telligence and his impatient temperament placed him entirely in disaccord with this perpetual hammering, without proper combination and without manœuvres, at the apparently unbreakable wall which the Germans had erected. It appeared to him absurd simply to stand always in front of this solid construction without seeking elsewhere a weak point in the enemy's armour. The only result he saw of this *guerre d'usure* was that the Government was constantly called upon to supply more men for the slaughter, and to impose upon the nation other hardships of a material nature. He knew that Haig and Robertson were at one in thinking that it was in this mode of warfare that a solution would be found, and their entire absence of imagination, their apparent inability to discover some less costly method, made both men the object of what may fairly be called his patriotic hostility.

If anything further was needed to persuade the Prime Minister to take some definite action, or at least to search for every means of getting rid of Haig and Robertson, it was the subsequent events of 1917. I allude to the action of Messines on June 7th, that of Verdun from August 20th to 26th, and that of La Malmaison from October 23rd to 26th; and, on the other hand, the Battle of Flanders, June to November, and the Cambrai operation, November 20th to December 6th.

The first three affairs (Messines, fought by the British, and Verdun and La Malmaison by the French) had shown that an offensive having a limited objective, carefully prepared by massing artillery and launched with a relative measure of surprise, always obtained considerable results; and, with comparatively small

losses, ensured the capture of a large number of prisoners and an appreciable advance, always provided that the troops were immediately reorganised upon the territory conquered.

On the contrary, the Battle of Flanders, a repetition of the Battle of the Somme, showed once again the inanity and the futility of prolonged bludgeoning; after five months (June 7th to November 6th) there was only an average gain of six kilometres to show for the enormous losses of life.

At one of the Inter-Allied Conferences which took place at Downing Street during this interminable and unsuccessful battle, Mr. Lloyd George could not prevent himself from expressing, in the presence of General Robertson, his doubts about the wisdom of the system which was being employed; doubts which all those present, and especially the French Ministers, seemed entirely to share. Robertson let the diatribe (in which several other personages joined) play itself out, and then, with the utmost calmness, and with an assurance which certainly had some effect, he pronounced the following words: "It seems to me that no one here has grasped the full importance that we, the High Command, attach to the Battle of Flanders. We hope to obtain from it the greatest results. We know the enormous harm it is causing to the German army. It may have decisive results." At the time General Robertson held out this prospect (which the future was not destined to fulfil) he may still have had some illusions about the battle, for the winter had not yet transformed Passchendale into an immense quagmire.

At a subsequent Inter-Allied Conference held in

London some time afterwards (to which I will refer later), Lloyd George asked Pétain his opinion of the Battle of Flanders. With his habitual frankness, which has often done him harm with people incapable of hearing the truth when it is not agreeable to them, Pétain replied laconically : " On ne peut pas se battre en même temps contre le Boche et contre la boue. Il faut choisir." The Battle of Flanders, dear to Marshal Haig and General Robertson, was never better or more succinctly summed up.

The Cambrai affair only deepened the unfavourable impression which Mr. Lloyd George had formed of Sir Douglas Haig. It will be remembered that it was there that a large number of tanks were first employed on a battlefield.

On November 20th General Byng, who commanded the Third Army, used 360 in support of seven divisions (of which five were in the first line, sustained by 1,000 pieces of artillery) between the Péronne and Bapaume route to Cambrai. There was, however, no prior artillery preparation. The cannon only began to thunder at dawn when the tanks set forth. The Germans were completely taken by surprise, and our troops advanced like lightning. In a single movement they arrived almost at the suburbs of Cambrai. Never before on the Western Front had we been so near to breaking the enemy's lines.

General Byng, whose work throughout the war justly earned him the reputation of being one of the most distinguished of our generals, had himself, with his Staff, evolved the Cambrai plan. He had also been one of the first to foresee the possibilities of tanks, which he proposed thoroughly to test in this operation.

The Prime Minister was well aware of the long struggle which Byng had had before he could induce Haig to agree to this operation. He probably knew all the more about this particular matter because the Secretary of the War Cabinet, Lieutenant-Colonel (now Sir) Maurice Hankey, had, together with Major-General Swinton, always taken a keen interest in the development of tanks, and followed closely everything which took place at the Front regarding their possible use.

Byng urged upon Haig that the British forces were somewhat discouraged by the unfortunate results of the Battle of Artois and the Battle of Flanders; that it was advisable to restore confidence as quickly as possible by some operation which might have a rapid success, and that the one which he proposed would answer that purpose. The result proved that he was absolutely right, and had everyone else done their part as he did his, the story of Cambrai would have been different. But after his forces had taken 12,000 prisoners and 136 guns, the tragic sequence was that we lost 9,000 prisoners and 148 guns.

Why? The answer may be found in a work on surprise attacks written by the French General Staff in February, 1918, and which has never been published. Referring to the Cambrai movement, it says: "L'insuccès de l'offensive anglaise est dû à ce que l'effort demandé aux divisions de première ligne était trop grand, en raison de ce fait qu'il n'y avait derrière ces divisions aucune réserve pour continuer l'attaque et la transformer en succès."

This absence of the necessary forces behind the attack launched by Byng was not the fault of the latter. On the contrary, Haig had obstinately refused

to put at his disposition the number of divisions which Byng considered necessary, and for which he had constantly pressed.

It may be taken for granted that in the eyes of Mr. Lloyd George it was not Byng but Haig who was responsible for the Cambrai check.

There is reason to think that by this time the Prime Minister had more or less come to the conclusion that the military destinies of the Empire were not entrusted to the proper hands, and that he had determined to get rid of both Haig and Robertson. At one moment he seems to have almost decided to dismiss Haig and to replace him—temporarily—by Robertson. Certainly during the last week of December, 1917, or the first week of January, 1918, members of Foch's Staff had some ground for believing that that was about to be done.

But Mr. Lloyd George had already sought in other ways to achieve his purpose. He realised perfectly that he would be staking the fate of his Government if he attempted to remove Haig, unless he could convict him of military insufficiency, unless he had something to show both Parliament and the country in support of that judgment.

On account of certain information which had been placed before him, he had been struck (and had so expressed himself) by the differences revealed from a comparison between the French battles since Pétain had become Commander-in-Chief (Verdun, August 20th to 26th, La Malmaison, October 23rd to 26th) and the British battles of the same year (Flanders and Cambrai) ; differences both in the mode of preparation and in the technical execution of these battles ;

and differences, entirely in favour of the French, in respect to the gains achieved and the losses sustained. The Prime Minister thought that he had found in this the basis of the necessary case against Haig. But in order to make it efficacious he wanted the War Cabinet to hear Pétain himself describe his own method and answer certain questions, the replies to which would necessarily be a reflection upon Haig. Therefore, when M. Painlevé came to London in October, 1917, Mr. Lloyd George asked him to bring Pétain with him, adding that Haig would also be present.

As a rule, it was Robertson and Foch who attended these meetings. It was not quite clear why Haig's presence was required. Apparently it was not clear to Haig himself, for he found an excellent reason for not leaving Montreuil. When Pétain learned that Haig was not going, he likewise decided to remain in France. But Mr. Lloyd George did not let the matter rest at that. When Painlevé was in London he pressed him to summon Pétain, and the French Prime Minister yielded to this insistence. These proceedings awakened Pétain's suspicions, and therefore, before going to Boulogne, he stopped at Montreuil. I am not in a position to state here what passed between the two leaders during the few moments they spent together, although I can say that Pétain has since disclosed it. But some of those who met him at Victoria heard him remark aloud, "*Si on m'a fait venir ici pour que je me prête à manœuvre, on a perdu son temps.*" ("If anyone has made me come here to use me for some manœuvre, they have lost their time.") And, indeed, it was lost time. For during the forty-eight hours that Pétain spent in London he might have been seen

at the Ritz or at the Carlton, at the theatre or elsewhere, but he was not seen much in Downing Street. I do not mean he did not meet Mr. Lloyd George at all. They did have an interview. But the Prime Minister was unable to obtain the least argument or criticism which he could use against Sir Douglas Haig. The only precise information which he succeeded in drawing from Pétain was the phrase I have cited above regarding the Battle of Flanders: "On ne peut pas se battre en même temps contre le Boche et contre la boue. Il faut choisir."

Nevertheless this check did not discourage Mr. Lloyd George in his attempt to use the French in order to obtain technical reasons which, in the eyes of the public, would justify the supersession of the Commander-in-Chief. As he had been unable to do anything with the cold and calculating Pétain, he was now obliged, in renewing his efforts, to make use of someone of less importance, but who, nevertheless, could speak with sufficient authority to impress the War Cabinet. It was thus that, at the express request of the British Government, the Chief of the Bureau of Operations of the French Grand Quartier-Général, Colonel Duffieux, was sent to London in December, 1917, to explain to the British Government the proceedings employed (and with comparative success) by the French High Command in the preparation, engagement, and execution of a battle. However, Pétain was now upon his guard. Before Colonel Duffieux left, he ordered him to say nothing which could be used against Marshal Haig. Duffieux followed his instructions carefully.

At the meeting of the War Cabinet, Mr. Lloyd

George did his utmost in the way of putting questions, which were later described as insidious and embarrassing. He obtained nothing in reply, except vague statements which could compromise no one. The meeting finally reached a stage that Mr. Lloyd George had certainly not expected when he had taken such trouble to arrange it ; for Colonel Duffieux, taking advantage of the fact that he was talking to the War Cabinet, expressed with considerable energy his conviction that the only way to win the war was for all the Allies to make a maximum effort, and to furnish the armies with everything of which they had need, and especially with men. This remark caused a certain chilliness in the atmosphere, for at that moment the British effectives in France showed a deficit of 200,000.

The year 1917 thus ended without Mr. Lloyd George having succeeded in his designs, while leaving him convinced that in seeking for a motive which would meet with public favour—some proof of military incapacity—he could not count upon using the French, and, least of all, Pétain.

At one moment, however, it seemed as if the conflict which ensued between Haig and the Government upon the man-power question might, by its very intensity, necessarily lead to a rupture. The Commander-in-Chief was urgently and incessantly demanding more men and more war material ; but, above all, more men.

The year 1917 had, indeed, as shown above, been costly in casualties. But just for that very reason, because they saw no encouraging results, the Prime Minister and some of his colleagues were inclined

to husband the national resources rather than blindly to keep on acceding to the constant cry of more men for the sacrifice. Yet the fact remained that Haig's forces were depleted to such an extent that his effectives were 200,000 below their proper strength. This created a grave situation for the Commander-in-Chief, and all the more so because the ultimate result of the Brest-Litovsk agreement (December 15th, 1917) would doubtless be to free more German troops for use on the Western Front. The Government, however, paid little attention to his repeated demands ; and, what was still more serious, did not seem to be taking the necessary steps to enable it to fill at the proper moment the gaps which the 1918 campaign was bound to make in the British forces in France. On the other hand, Haig's knowledge that men were available naturally rendered him more insistent.

For there were more than 1,000,000 men in khaki in England. The exact number on March 1st, 1918 (three weeks before the great German offensive), was 1,403,000 men and 91,000 officers. All these, however, were not fit for the front, although some of them would become so later ; for this figure included those in hospitals and those convalescing (amounting in all to 311,000 men and 12,000 officers), as well as certain categories employed in administration work at the depôts and otherwise. These undoubtedly comprised an important percentage of the total. But, nevertheless, there were, on March 1st, 513,000 men and 27,000 officers (forming part of the 1,403,000 men and 91,000 officers) who were undergoing military training, composed of 22,000 cadets, 8,000 men, and

1,000 officers, of new units in course of formation (heavy artillery, tanks, etc.), 333,000 men and 26,000 officers of category A, and 150,000 men of category B, who were being retrained with a view to being re-classed. There were besides 38,000 men and 8,000 officers employed in home defence and in guarding prisoners. It was contended that certain of these categories could be reduced so as to furnish more men and officers for the front. There were, for instance, 76,000 men and 2,000 officers employed as instructors and in permanent cadres, 11,000 men and 22,000 officers of Category A classed as non-combatants, 40,000 men and 2,000 officers in the depôts, 252,000 men and 6,000 officers employed in home works, and, finally, 42,000 men and 12,000 officers on the various staffs and in certain administrative posts.

Taking the figures as a whole, and without going into further details, there were in the United Kingdom on March 1st, 1918, 483,000 men and 79,000 officers of category A, and also 609,000 men of category B, of whom probably about 30 per cent. might have been used as combatants, thus giving another 200,000 men, making a total of, roughly, 700,000. Moreover, as a certain proportion of the 311,000 men and 12,000 officers in the hospitals and convalescing would progressively be able to return to the front, there were nearly 800,000 men available for active service.

The figures I have cited are taken from official sources, and are, I think, indisputable. The actual number fit for the front is, of course, to some extent, a matter of opinion. I believe that the estimate I have ventured to suggest is not exaggerated. I am aware that some military authorities would be inclined to think

that it is not sufficiently high. But after taking into account for any reasonable difference of opinion, and also for whatever danger there was of Germany attempting an invasion in the year 1918, it remains clear that Haig had every ground for dissatisfaction, and even for thinking that he was not being fairly supported when his divisions were not brought up to proper strength.

That admission, however, is not in itself a judgment upon the merits of this last stage of the conflict between Lloyd George and Haig. For while the latter was incontestably justified in demanding more men, yet it is impossible not to make some allowance for the attitude of a statesman who, having aroused his fellow-countrymen to make unheard of efforts and to submit to undreamt of sacrifices, was compelled month after month to see the man-power of the nation diminished by a general who adhered to a system in which he never had any real belief, and which the experience of several years had led him more than ever to distrust. While, judging after the event, it must be added that finally the war was not won by the means advocated by Haig and Robertson, it may be argued that all that happened before the period when Foch took supreme command contributed to the ultimate result. Obviously, that must be so in a certain indefinable measure. But it could, I think, be maintained with equal logic, and upon clearer facts, that the same end would have been achieved—and achieved with much less loss of life—had it not been for those largely mistaken efforts.

On the other hand, there was certainly a latent defect in the principles regarding the relations between the

Government and the Commander-in-Chief which Mr. Lloyd George laid down at the Inter-Allied meeting in July, 1917, to which I have referred. Undoubtedly he was right when he said that, as the object of any war was a political one, it was the province of the Government to fix it. Indeed, it was the repudiation of that sound doctrine which contributed to the downfall of Germany. There the soldiers controlled the situation. Successive Chancellors were but puppets, more or less pliable, in the hands of Hindenburg and Ludendorff. It was the General Staff which claimed, and which in practice exercised, the right to pronounce upon the political ends to be sought or accepted (for instance, it always prevented any comprehensible declaration about Belgium), until the final panic, when the unfortunate Erzberger was instructed to sign the Armistice by a telegram signed in the Chancellor's name, but which had really been sent by an affrighted General Staff—next to the Kaiser's flight, the most disgraceful episode of the German *débâcle*.

But it may well be doubted if Mr. Lloyd George was correct in saying that it lay with the Government to determine how many men should be allotted for each particular front. Certainly the Government must decide what is the total number of men the country can furnish. If Haig had asked for soldiers who did not exist, or who could not be found in England, he would have had no case whatever. But, on the other hand, the theory that a Commander-in-Chief must hold a certain front with the troops which the Government apportions to him (I do not refer to offensive operations in respect to which Mr. Lloyd George's doctrine gives a general the fullest scope),

the theory, in brief, that he can be expected to be responsible for what he considers is impossible from a military standpoint, is untenable.

But what Mr. Lloyd George did was quite as defective and still more indefensible than what he preached. He had no faith in the system of warfare of which Haig was the exponent, and he had no personal confidence in Haig's capabilities as a military leader. That sincere distrust is the one justification for the proceedings of which I have recounted the history. But Mr. Lloyd George would have shown more courage, perhaps it may be said would have acted more worthily, had he taken the bolder course and relieved Haig of his command. For whatever opinion one may rightly or wrongly form of Earl Haig's capacity, it is undeniable that the head of his own Government, to a certain extent, intrigued against him.

A statement that in the early months of 1918 Haig was not given the troops he demanded might seem at first sight to be inconsistent with certain comments, which I have ventured to make elsewhere, upon his refusal to contribute at that period to the Army of Manœuvre which Foch had tried to form. But, in fact, there is no contradiction. What Foch asked for were divisions. He knew that Haig's divisions were under strength, and would willingly have accepted them that way. There is no relation between these two questions, and presumably the basis of Haig's refusal was that he could not have held his line had he ceded any divisions to Foch—another debatable point into which I do not propose to enter here.

The defeat of St. Quentin might possibly (whether justly or otherwise) have led to the retirement of

Marshal Haig. But his position was rendered secure, and the conflict between Lloyd George and himself was terminated, by the supreme command being given to Foch. Thereafter the latter was a shield for Haig, who became a subordinate, having a rôle which, although of the first importance, was limited to carrying out the directives of the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces.

The Armistice found Haig at the head of the British armies in France, which he had then commanded for nearly three years—a longer period than the High Command was exercised by any other Allied leader. In the bitter struggle between himself and the Prime Minister he was undoubtedly the victor, for although repeatedly attacked, he maintained his position until the end. It may, perhaps, be said that the strategy and the tactics which he used in this contest were superior to those which he displayed on the Western Front.

CHAPTER IV

LUDENDORFF

IF the relations between the French command and the civil powers were different from those which prevailed in England, still more distinguishable were those between the German Government and the General Staff.

It is largely due to Ludendorff himself that we can now follow the source of the conflict which he waged with Berlin. His successive books, if inconsistent and contradictory, are at least replete with details. They also reveal clearly Ludendorff's own character and mentality. They furnish abundant evidence that, despite his patriotism and his love for and his belief in the destiny of his country, yet to him more than to any other single man must be attributed the fulness of her *débâcle*. The burden of his own protest, reiterated through hundreds of pages, is that the General Staff rarely made an error, except when it lacked in severity or when it failed to bend the civil government to its wishes; that the latter is responsible for all the ills which have befallen Germany; and that if he, Ludendorff, could only have doubled himself and have been at one and the same time the Chancellor of the Empire and in Supreme Command at the front, the war would never have been lost.

Although Ludendorff is still the living symbol of Prussian militarism, and is used by the Monarchists to rally recruits, his reading of the past is by no means universally accepted. Certainly in Germany he has emerged from the war a popular hero. On the other hand, he has some determined opponents and fierce critics. Of these the most conspicuous is Professor Hans Delbrück, for whom, with his vast knowledge and his precise intellect, it is only child's play to dissect and show the emptiness of Ludendorff's somewhat muddled attempts to place all the blame on others. But amongst those who have had some intimate knowledge of, and connection with, public life, and who are neither moved by noisy heroics nor influenced by prejudice, the prevalent judgment seems to be that Ludendorff would have done better both for his country and for his own fame if he had interfered less with the course of political events.

There is no disposition to exempt the civil powers from all censure. It is thought that both the General Staff and the Government committed many grave errors in their respective spheres, but that the latter at least had the saving grace of not going beyond its own province. The conflict between the Chancellor and the military chiefs is no novelty in Germany. Bismarck, strong supporter as he was of the dogma, "blood and iron," not only had several serious clashes with von Moltke, but he complained bitterly, both during the war with Austria and, later, during that with France, that the High Command tried to conceal things from him and tried to keep him at a distance. Bismarck, however, could hold his own.

His successors had not the same strength. Upon the whole, the military party improved its position during the years that the late Kaiser was on the throne.

The culmination came when Ludendorff went to the Western Front. For the first time a practical demonstration was given of Bernhardt's theory that the statesmen should shape their policy in such a way as will best carry out and second the designs of the High Command—a theory which is the exact inverse of that laid down and inculcated by Mr. Lloyd George. Ludendorff loudly claims that the collapse came solely because he was not permitted to apply that principle to the fullest extent. But the Wilhelmstrasse was undoubtedly bereft of a great measure of its power, and was greatly restricted in its actions, by the insistence and intrigues of the General Staff. It is, therefore, content to let the result of the experiment speak for itself, while discreetly intimating that General Ludendorff's lack of vision is in no small degree accountable for the present situation. Ludendorff was Chief of the Section of Concentration of Operations from 1908 to 1913. It was during that period that von Schlieffen's plan was modified. Its salient feature was (after entering France by way of Belgium) a gigantic envelopment of the French left. This necessitated a strong German right.

As I have written elsewhere, von Schlieffen "ultimately arrived at the idea of throwing nearly four-fifths of his mobilised forces upon the left wing of the French army, while the invasion of Holland was not entirely eliminated from these calculations. The younger von Moltke, who became Chief of the Staff in 1906, inherited

this plan. While he did not change its character, he does not appear to have adopted it with any enthusiasm. He had neither the courage nor the resolution to sweep it aside, but he nibbled at it. Von Schlieffen had constantly worried his assistants to make the right stronger, but von Moltke strengthened his left at the expense of his right. Undoubtedly von Schlieffen's plan was an audacious conception, and it required a strong and bold man to put it into execution. But von Moltke was naturally feeble and vacillating."

Professor Hans Delbrück points out that Ludendorff is, so far as he knows, the only military writer who defends this change, that he was Chief of the Section of Operations when it was made, and that among many members of the General Staff he is considered to be its author.

Ludendorff has himself explained that, although he was Chief of the Section of Operations, he was not von Moltke's adviser on strategic questions. But although he disclaims primary responsibility, it is noteworthy that he defends it; which is all the more curious since Hindenburg has condemned it as a "liquefaction."

Ludendorff's statement on this subject is both interesting in itself and typical of his mode of arguing: "The manœuvre which was to be executed in France in order to obtain a decision consisted of a powerful turning to the left of the German army, with Thionville as a pivot. The forces which it was contemplated to engage towards that end were sufficiently strong to ensure the victory, and all the more so because, according to the information received, the enemy High Command would be taken by surprise. But the forces left in Lorraine to protect this movement against an

enemy attack coming between Metz and Strasbourg were so feeble that a hostile advance, in the direction of the line of communications of the left wing of the German army, would have made its effect felt in that region before the right wing could have gained the victory. Apart from this danger, Colonel General von Moltke was afraid that our industrial territory north of Saarbrücker might be destroyed. He considered these dangers so great that he believed it necessary to guard against them; and all the more so because it became more and more probable that at an early stage the enemy would make an attack between Strasbourg and Metz, and that this would be combined with a secondary operation in Alsace.

“On the other hand, these enterprises on the part of the enemy would create for us the possibility of defeating a very important part of the French army at the outset of hostilities, and of protecting Alsace. Colonel General von Moltke attached great importance to these two points. He therefore retained the fundamental idea of the Schlieffen plan, but he thought that its execution would be facilitated if as important fractions as possible of the enemy army were destroyed in Alsace and Lorraine, as France would then be unable to utilise them against the attack of our right wing. The result was an extension, but also a ‘deformation,’ of Schlieffen’s plan of concentration.”

In brief, Ludendorff asserts at one and the same time that the fundamental idea of von Schlieffen’s plan was retained, and that the plan was deformed at its most vital point. He attempts to support this contention by showing that as the German army had been increased by six and a half divisions, von Moltke

was able to strengthen his left without weakening his right. But the very essence of von Schlieffen's conception demanded that any augmentation of the number of troops available should go further to strengthen his right. His project was alike bold and simple. Its success was dependent upon intrepid adhesion to its central idea—the sacrifice of everything to the envelopment of the French left. Von Moltke did not make his right so strong as he might have done, while he complicated and transformed the spirit as well as the letter of von Schlieffen's plan when he sought a species of insurance by relying upon operations in Lorraine. Even Ludendorff admits this when later (and in apparent contradiction with himself) he says: "Colonel General von Moltke ought to have diminished the effectives destined to operate in Lorraine." * It is safe to say that if von Schlieffen had altered his own plan at all it would have been by way of extending his right to the sea.

When the war broke out, Hindenburg, who had retired in 1911, after having commanded the Fourth Army Corps, was sixty-seven years of age. He at once asked to be employed. But it was not until August 22nd that he got a telegram asking if he was ready to go on active service. Half an hour later, and before he knew the post to which he was to be allotted, he received another telegram signed "Ludendorff," stating that the sender had been appointed his Chief of Staff, and would arrive in Hanover by special train at three o'clock the next morning to take away his new Chief. These two men, whose names history

* I have translated the above excerpt from the French edition of Ludendorff's book. (See *Conduite de la Guerre et Politique*, p. 88.)

always links together, had never before met each other. But a brief conversation convinced both men that they would work well together, and also proved that Ludendorff would be the master mind.

Their first great exploit was to win the Battle of Tannenberg, less than a week later. Judged by its consequences alone, that victory will always rank as one of the notable events of the war. Ludendorff himself is fully conscious of its importance. In quoting von Schlieffen's preface to an edition of Clausewitz; "For Clausewitz war is submitted to the supreme decision of arms. This doctrine led us to 'Königgratz' and 'Sedan,'" he remarks, "and personally, I add, to Tannenberg."

Delbrück is inclined to depreciate both the military talent shown at that battle and also the share for which credit should be given to Ludendorff. He remarks that it was really the execution of an idea previously studied in time of peace, and adds that the only touch of genius was the "rameutenement" of all Mackensen's corps to Rossau, which, he alleges, was accomplished by the advice of General Otto von Below. Similarly, while Delbrück says that the most important feats of Ludendorff and Hindenburg, and one which did show real strategic genius, were their retreat from Poland in the autumn of 1914 and the ulterior "rameutenement" of their army in Western Prussia on the Russian right flank, he adds that according to information from a sure source (which he does not cite) this movement was originated by Hindenburg.*

But while all Delbrück's criticism seems well founded,

* Ludendorff, *Peint par Lui-même*, p. 99.

yet it is impossible to forget that he enters the lists already hostile on other grounds,* for he was one of Bethmann-Hollweg's firmest supporters and never forgave Ludendorff for being the main author of his downfall. Delbrück's estimate of Bethmann-Hollweg may be debatable, but Ludendorff was undoubtedly guilty of a grave error in displacing the Chancellor when he had no one better—indeed, no one equally competent—to put in his place.

The valid excuse for the intrigue against Mr. Asquith in December, 1916, was that the majority had, in the person of Mr. Lloyd George, someone more fitted to cope with the problems of the war. But after Bethmann-Hollweg came Michaelis—and then Hertling: one a nonentity in the hands of Ludendorff, the other not wishing to be a tool, but unable to control the situation. The truth was that Ludendorff would not gladly suffer anyone except a figurehead to be the Chancellor; and to have only a figurehead in office was fatal to the interests of the country. The only alternatives were the advent of a man sufficiently strong at least to hold his own with the General Staff, or a military dictatorship.

* Colonel Repington, in his *After the War Diary*, p. 261, relates a conversation he had in Berlin with Delbrück, who, he mentions, was the last German who dined in his house before the war. But Delbrück judges Repington rather severely. He mentions that the latter had revealed to the world that "that fanfaron, Lloyd George, concluding from his own cowardice that the English people were also cowardly, was afraid to give battle on the decisive point—in France; but wanted to look for a decision in Syria," and adds that "from that day, thanks to Repington's indiscretion . . . it was known in Germany that a great Allied offensive on the Western Front was at least improbable." —Ludendorff, *Peint par Lui-même*, p. 120.

There was in Germany one man in whom the former solution might have been found—Prince von Bülow, and Ludendorff suggested him as Bethmann-Hollweg's successor. But various other influences were at work against him ; while, in any event, the Kaiser would never have willingly recalled him to office. He had never forgiven von Bülow for not having defended him in the Reichstag debate respecting the famous article in the *Daily Telegraph*, and in a matter of that kind Wilhelm II. always placed his Hohenzollern pride before the interests of his country.

On August 29th, 1916, General Field-Marshal Hindenburg became Chief of the General Staff, with Ludendorff as First Quartermaster-General. In reality that meant that Hindenburg was Commander-in-Chief on the Western Front, with Ludendorff as his Chief of Staff. The latter expressly states that he "shared the entire responsibility" with Hindenburg. He seems to have done more than that. In his book, *War Memories*, Ludendorff makes no secret of the fact that he alone directed the course of the war, and that in his own opinion he is entitled to the major credit. Colonel Bauer, who occupied an important post on the General Staff, and who appears to have been an active intriguer, has also written a book,* from which it would seem that Ludendorff was the actual Commander-in-Chief ; while Delbrück recounts that, in speaking to him of Hindenburg, Bauer said : "In the end we no longer even told him where were the different corps."

Hindenburg and Ludendorff had exactly the same aims, the same idea about the superiority of Germany

* *Der Grosse Krieg in Feld und Heimat.*

and the Germans, and the same ambitions for their country and race. But they both expressed their views and worked differently. Not only on account of his age, but also by reason of the serenity of disposition for which he had always been known, Hindenburg was much less active than his titular subordinate, to whom he was well content to leave the bulk of the work. Moreover, his character was penetrated by a streak of benignancy which was absolutely foreign to Ludendorff. The manner of the two men was in equally marked contrast. To some extent this was due to their difference of birth. For Hindenburg—whose name is really von Benckendorf und von Hindenburg—belongs to the Prussian aristocracy, while Ludendorff's father was a Pomeranian merchant. This difference in origin has its effect in Germany, as is shown by the distinction between the way the two are regarded in certain circles; while Ludendorff's usefulness is admitted, Hindenburg is the more trusted.

Hindenburg was essentially a soldier imbued with a lifelong love for his profession; but it is difficult to form any opinion about his ability as a strategist; it is impossible to say where Ludendorff ended and where he began, if, indeed, Ludendorff left anything to be done. Undoubtedly, Hindenburg's conceptions were neither so audacious nor so quickly formed as those of Ludendorff, but he was calmer in an acute crisis, as was proved in October, 1918. Throughout he was in perfect accord with his brilliant Chief of Staff, and was never jealous of his pre-eminence. He was only anxious that the country should derive the utmost possible benefit from their co-operation.

Very different was Ludendorff. His confidence in

himself was sublime. His mode of expressing it was arrogant. He was oppressive where Hindenburg was kindly, and overbearing where the latter was tolerant. His pride verged upon ill-concealed vanity. In these and in certain other respects he illustrated the unpleasant type of Prussian officer.

He was in no respect an idealist. Hindenburg had a regard for the House of Hohenzollern which made him revere every member of the Royal Family, but Ludendorff only regarded his sovereign as the appointed head of a state which needed a monarch. Possibly the Kaiser felt that his deference was not complete. In any event, he never liked him.

Ludendorff's capacity for work was prodigious. His energy was inexhaustible. There was no limit to his activities, and as he gave the impression of quickly arriving at a fixed decision upon every question, and of having the determination to enforce his views, he seemed to many to be the strong man who alone could guide the nation through the shallows.

The history of the war contains many national tragedies, ranging from the pathetic to the grandiose. I know none so appalling as that of the fate of Germany having been placed in the hands of Erich Ludendorff. Or did he appoint himself to be the saviour? Did he insist that instead of performing the duty to which he was called he should also infringe upon those of others? If so, his responsibility is doubled. The facts are simple, though judgments may differ.

In Ludendorff's favour it must be said that his sincerity is unquestionable. He is not a "bluffer." If he asked others to believe in him it is because he firmly believed in himself. But though that may be

in his extenuation, it only deepens the gloom of the tragedy. A country which in time of stress possesses no superman is to be pitied. But woe be to the country which at a great crisis in its history pins its faith to, and stakes everything on, a phantom. Many men believe themselves more capable than does the rest of the world. Much more rarely a man inspires in others greater confidence than he possesses in himself. Perhaps Mr. Bonar Law might be taken as an example of the latter type. But occasionally a man of no supreme ability not only has an overweening belief in himself, but prompts the same blind trust in most of those with whom he comes in contact. Ludendorff fell into the last category. He gave the impression of being resolute and determined, but the mask hid a second-rate, indecisive, and confused mentality. The task he had undertaken was far beyond his powers. More often than not he was out of his depth. As depicted by himself, and as known by others, he presents the spectacle of a man of limited intelligence and still more limited knowledge attempting to carry responsibilities which would have taxed to the utmost the strongest personality. The result was that the burden crushed Ludendorff, and his collapse entailed that of his country.

Ludendorff was incredibly ignorant. In the final result he was accountable for much. His ignorance was also incurable; for his thorough contempt for all that was not German never led him to seek enlightenment beyond the frontiers of Germany. In the ordinary course of events an ignorant Prussian general is not likely to do much harm: in the last reckoning it may even be in his favour. But put that

same individual in the position where he controls the destinies of his country—and thinks he ought to control them—during a war which, in effect, resolves itself into a struggle between the greatest intellects in every nation trying to mould adverse circumstances, and the result is likely to be disastrous—for the Prussian general's country.

Ludendorff has written that Germany did not violate Belgium, because certain treaties gave her the right to go through Belgian territory.* It may be questioned whether that statement is to be ascribed to ignorance or to the curious Prussian idea that constant iteration will convert any wild allegation into a solid fact. But it is curious that during the war, when he railed about the attacks which that invasion drew down upon his country, he did not tell the world what were those treaties, and that he does not do so now. Professor Delbrück, who is just as sound a German as Ludendorff, and a much greater historical authority, says that no such treaties exist.

But however that may be, there remains plenty of evidence of Ludendorff's imperfect knowledge—supplied by himself—such as his belief that it was the Jews who forced the United States into declaring war against Germany.

But his vital, his fatal, defect for the rôle which he assumed was his lack of mental lucidity. This man, whom all except those close to him thought a model of severe resolution, was often wavering and undecided. Bethmann-Hollweg has told how, after hours of discussion, he would arrive at a conclusion which was

* *Conduitede la Guerre et Politique*, p. 83.

to be final, and the very next day would send a telegram saying that he had changed his mind. He never knew exactly what he intended to do beyond a certain near point. He knew quite well what he wanted; he knew the point which he wished to reach. More than that, there was no hesitation about the first step. But he had little foresight, and, consequently, often encountered difficulties for which he was not prepared. While, as his books show, he did not even have the faculty of being able to think clearly and consecutively, and thus to advance slowly from point to point, which might have compensated for his lack of vision.

These failings had their effect upon both his military and his political activities. I do not propose to discuss at length Ludendorff's claim to be a consummate strategist. He was always at his best in *une guerre de manœuvre*; and in warfare of that nature he had not only studied and learned, but he created. It has been said that to be a great general under present conditions one must be a great man: and (using the term in its superlative tense) Ludendorff was not the first, precisely because he was not the second. He would have accomplished more as lieutenant to a stronger chief—always provided that they did not clash.

Professor Delbrück, who says that in twenty-four centuries there have been (as far as our knowledge enables us to judge) not more than twenty-four great captains, would certainly not include Wellington in that number. Yet the latter's lucid brain, his resolute character, and the great common sense which never deserted him either in victory or in defeat, placed him

in the front rank as a general. Those were the qualities of which Ludendorff was conspicuously destitute.

But what I propose to examine more closely is Ludendorff's relations with the Government. He has recently protested that he never interfered in politics. That statement is presumably subject to some definition of how far a Commander-in-Chief (which Ludendorff practically was) can go without interfering with the duties of the civil authorities. Ludendorff's own avowals show that he claimed the right to go far enough to give him control over the whole conduct of the war, while the facts on record prove that he exercised that right.

In days gone by there was occasionally a political ruler who was also a great general—Frederick the Great, Napoleon.* That is unlikely to occur again; and, barring that solution, statesmen and military leaders are never likely to be absolutely at one during time of war. The nearest approach to unity was supplied by Germany. Bismarck and von Moltke, two men of great character who, despite the determination of the one and the occasional obstinacy of the other, despite many clashes and some permanent differences of opinion, worked together for the good of their country. Germany also furnished during the recent war the worst example of a High Command and a Government counteracting each other's efforts. Throughout each was distrustful of the other, while G.Q.G. was always aggressive and generally intriguing. When one glances over a fraction of the tons of correspondence one wonders how Ludendorff found any

* Cromwell was also both, but he was never confronted by a foreign war.

time to fight the Allies when he had such a battle nearer home on his hands. But more serious than the waste of time involved was the impression made on the country by the knowledge that the Government and the High Command, instead of being at one, were often at absolute variance the one with the other. The union of Bismarck and von Moltke was a great factor for success under Wilhelm I. The struggle of Ludendorff on the one side and Bethmann-Hollweg and his successors on the other paved the way to the defeat of 1918.

To illustrate clearly the wide gap separating the doctrine which won the war from that which lost it, I repeat here the formula laid down by Mr. Lloyd George at the memorable meeting of the Allies in July, 1917.* In effect he said "that the object of any war being a political one, it was the province of the Government to decide on the one hand the effort which the country should be asked to make to maintain that object ; and on the other to decide what should be the points where the forces obtained by such efforts should be used and the number which should be allotted to each point. When the Government had once reached a conclusion upon all these essential and vital questions, which were its concern alone, then, but only then, commenced the rôle of the Commanders-in-Chief. Each of them, having been given an objective and a certain proportion of the national resources and forces, should then be left absolutely free to choose his own means to attain that end. Just as much as it was inadmissible that a general in com-

* See Chapter II. So far as I know, this has never been published before,

mand should meddle in the prerogatives and duties of the Government, so it was equally indefensible that the Government should in any way intervene, directly or indirectly, in the execution of the operations, that being the exclusive domain of the Commander-in-Chief."

I have mentioned that Mr. Lloyd George unconsciously developed the German dictum that "war is the continuation of politics with arms in one's hands." But at least one German—Ludendorff—repudiated that theory.

Ludendorff is at least equally definite (if not always consistent) in his view of the same question. One of his main regrets to-day is that he did not at the outset insist upon the dismissal of the Chancellor. "In the result it was particularly fatal that the new Supreme Command, when it first entered on its functions, believed that it would have a collaborator in the Chancellor, and that it did not bring pressure to bear in August, 1916, to get the latter removed from his post. But as soon as it was recognised that the Chancellor von Bethmann was totally incapable of directing the people in the war, and of being useful in the conduct of the war, it immediately advised the Emperor of the pernicious effect he was having, and suggested to him as the only possible successors Grand Admiral von Tirpitz and the Prince von Bülow. Finally, it begged His Majesty to accept its resignation in case that fatal man was not dismissed, because with him it would be only possible to lose and not to win the war."*

This admission shows clearly that in Ludendorff's

* *Conduite de la Guerre et Politique*, p. 182.

opinion it was the province of the High Command to determine the choice of Chancellor—an indisputable instance of interference in politics. But elsewhere Ludendorff defines the guardianship which the High Command should exercise over the Government: "G.Q.G. considered the question of peace a political matter. It thus placed itself upon the same ground as Clausewitz. But while not endangering the conclusion of peace and not prolonging the duration of war, it was its duty to watch so that the Chancellor's peace policy should not cause any damage to the conduct of the war, and so that a frontier might be obtained, based on the experience of the war, which would enable a new war to be undertaken under favourable military and economic conditions."*

In July, 1917, when for a moment Bethmann-Hollweg's opponents thought that they would once again fail to encompass his downfall, Ludendorff, in a letter to the Emperor which was lacking even in the ordinary forms of politeness, resigned on the ground that he had no confidence in the Chancellor. Some weeks later, in January, 1918, Hindenburg and Ludendorff (the letter was signed by the former, but was doubtless written by the latter) complained to the Kaiser about the conduct of various political questions, which led to the advice that they should devote their attention solely to military matters. In the meantime they had informed the Chancellor that they felt "jointly responsible to the German people, to history, and to our own conscience, regarding the terms of peace." Hertling, however, in his turn, advised Wilhelm that the High Command was going beyond

* *Conduite de la Guerre et Politique* p. 182.

its functions, and in his memorandum he went to the gist of the whole question: "To allow the confidence which the German people have in these two great leaders to be exploited, for political purposes, to such a point that their political views have an unlimited range, would be equivalent to placing in the hands of these generals all the responsibility for the direction of both military and political affairs."

From Ludendorff's own words it thus appears that, during the war at least, he preached the right of the G.Q.G. to intervene in matters of policy. He also practised what he preached, whether it was the question of Belgium or of Poland, of unrestricted submarine warfare or anything else. As General von Wrisberg has written: "The G.Q.G. intervened in all domains, military and non-military."*

Sometimes, however, Ludendorff went further than he cares to admit—further, perhaps, than the limits which he himself laid down. This was especially so in respect to Belgium. His course in respect to that problem is somewhat difficult to follow step by step, having been decidedly tortuous, though always directed towards the same end. But when it is made clear it entirely confutes his assertion that he never blocked his country's path to peace negotiations. Hindenburg and Ludendorff now realise that this accusation tells against them. They vigorously disclaim responsibility either for bringing America into the war or for prolonging the contest with the Allies until they were defeated. They cannot deny that it was the High Command which violently urged the

* Von Wrisberg was head of the General Department of War at the German War Office.

Government to adopt the policy of unrestricted submarine warfare. But Ludendorff has written many pages to prove that the United States would have joined the Allies in any event, and that the decision was not due to the submarine campaign. In both cases, however, the evidence against him is conclusive,* while his efforts to free himself from responsibility regarding the question of Belgium lack candour (not to say more), and have finally landed him in a quagmire of self-contradiction.

In the summer of 1917 the Papal Nuncio, Monseigneur Pacelli, attempted to get from the German Government some definite statement about its attitude respecting peace. It was well known—and the Nuncio emphasised it—that the Allies were firm in maintaining that no negotiations were possible except on the basis of the restoration of the independence of Belgium: that was a question which they would not discuss. On June 26th, 1917, Monseigneur Pacelli saw Ludendorff in Berlin. According to the latter's own account of the conversation, he was asked about Germany's intentions regarding Belgium, and replied: "I assured him that we would re-establish her full independence."

Less than two months later—on September 11th, 1917—the same subject was discussed at a Council of the Crown. The Chancellor, Michaelis, supported by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (von Kühlmann), had got authority to make, if he saw fit, a declaration that Germany would be prepared to re-establish Belgium integrally. The High Command

* Hindenburg said to the Chancellor on January 9th, 1917, "We are armed to confront any eventuality against America, Denmark, Holland and also Switzerland."

opposed this, contending that it was necessary to occupy the line of the Meuse in the region of Liège, and to hold Liège itself, at least for a certain period. The Kaiser decided in favour of the Chancellor, with the limitation that the proposal should be re-examined if peace did not ensue before the end of the year.*

Ludendorff's comment is: "The G.Q.G. bowed to the decision of His Majesty." In view of what then happened that statement has a peculiar interest.

Ludendorff says that at the meeting the High Command submitted a memorandum giving its views about Belgium. The truth is that the memorandum, which insisted upon the need of holding the Meuse line and occupying Liège, was only sent three days later, being dated September 14th. Obviously there is a distinction to be drawn between the High Command using a memorandum at a meeting to discuss the question, and later forwarding one containing arguments against the decision already reached, and before which, according to Ludendorff, it had inclined. But Michaelis says that the only object of this communication was to place on record the stand which the G.Q.G. had taken at the Council of the Crown. In itself that is quite a plausible explanation, although incidentally it vitiates Ludendorff's assertion that the memorandum was given at the meeting.

But the very day after the Council of the Crown was held, the Chancellor, in a letter thanking Hindenburg, said: "I make my own the exigencies of the Superior

* Delbrück discloses that the archives of the Empire do not contain any procès-verbal of this Council. It has been stated that the Kaiser's assent to Michaelis's proposal was subordinated to Ludendorff's demands. But there is every reason to believe that the account given above (which is that put forward by Michaelis) is correct.

Direction of the Army to which, in your opinion, it is necessary that our peace programme should adhere absolutely. Consequently, I admit that for the protection of our western industries you both exact first Liège, and a strip of territory for security. I also conceive that you both expect, as a result of a real and strict economic union of Belgium to Germany, that the Belgians will, from motives of economic selfishness, discard once and for all any idea of ever having with us any difficulty which will have to be settled by a recourse to arms. Consequently, when we have done all that is necessary regarding the economic union, which will naturally take several years after the first peace negotiations, it will be possible to dispense with the military guarantee. Liège and the annexed territory would, therefore, only be exacted as factors for our security, or for a time."

On September 15th Hindenburg replied. The essential clause of his letter reads as follows: "The economic attachment of Belgium to Germany will necessitate pressure upon Belgium even after the conclusion of the peace. An occupation of several years will answer that purpose; for military reasons that will be none the less obligatory, even if England and America evacuate France."

The Chancellor's letter would seem to indicate that he did not sincerely believe in what he had himself proposed; it also illustrates once again that Michaelis's incessant anxiety was to be on good terms with Hindenburg, and, above all, with the more terrible Ludendorff. Hindenburg's reply shows just how far the G.Q.G. had really "bowed to the decision of His Majesty." But what both letters showed was that the High

Command, with the feeble Michaelis as an accomplice, had deliberately barred the way to any negotiations for peace ; for knowing perfectly well that negotiations were only possible upon the basis of the complete and unconditional re-establishment of Belgian independence (hence the Kaiser's pronouncement at the meeting of the Council of the Crown), it sought to impose conditions which admittedly would entail Belgian dependence upon Germany.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the grievous wrong which Hindenburg and Ludendorff did the German people by the deceit they practised. In 1919 the Government published the letters. There was a storm of indignation, and Herr Bauer (then President of the Council) and Erzberger led the way by bluntly accusing Ludendorff, Hindenburg, Michaelis, and Helfferich of having prevented a move towards peace. Ludendorff realised the gravity of the position. On August 7th, 1919, Michaelis published the letter, which was approved and countersigned by the other three, giving his version of the whole matter. It will suffice to quote the one sentence whereby he attempts to explain the restrictions respecting Belgium outlined in his correspondence with Hindenburg : " The military and economic views expressed were not a matter of reserves to be made in regard to England, but were only the ends towards which we should have tended in the negotiations with Belgium itself."

It is not surprising that this decidedly specious interpretation did not have any great success. Since then the indefatigable Delbrück has discovered in the archives of the Empire a document which makes still stronger the case against the High Command. On

September 27th, 1917—more than two weeks after the Council of the Crown—Hindenburg telegraphed to the Chancellor: "I have heard it said anew that the Council of the Crown gave up Belgium. I should be grateful if your Excellency would have this assertion denied. As a matter of fact, there was only a question of giving up the definite possession of the Flanders coast in the event that we should at that price obtain peace this year, and detach England from France."

Yet, as has been shown above, Ludendorff's own account is that, against his advice, the Kaiser at the Council of the Crown meeting, "gave the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs full power to recognise the territorial integrity and the absolute sovereignty of Belgium," and that "the G.Q.G. bowed before the decision of His Majesty." *

The truth is the High Command persisted in its stand about Belgium until August, 1918; in other words, persisted until a time when its views were of no longer any great importance. As late as January 7th, 1918, Hindenburg wrote: "In the course of the Conference about Belgium I found on the part of the Government the most extreme reserve regarding the military exigencies."

It is unquestionable that Ludendorff claimed the right of the High Command to dictate the policy of the Government, that he exercised that right upon every possible occasion, in every matter—the Kingdom

* The position of von Kühlmann, who did not sign the Michaelis letter, is not quite clear. I have read several accounts—one of which is supposed to have been supplied by von Kühlmann himself—and when in Germany have been told others. But Ludendorff's desire to make him at least equally responsible is apparent. Von Kühlmann was never in sympathy with the political activities of the High Command.

of Poland, the Treaty with Russia, the Ukranian situation—he insisted that the High Command should pronounce the last word, and he did not hesitate to intrigue to achieve that end.

But throughout the war, and in all he has written since, he assails the civil government as the cause of all disasters, affirmative and negative alike. Through the maze of his complaints one theme constantly recurs—the negligence of the Government in bringing the morale of the people to a proper pitch. But he never indicates exactly how that is to be done. He and Hindenburg were both incapable of comprehending that the one thing which could have that effect was the cessation of the war—preferably by victory; if not, by compromise upon the best terms available. But Ludendorff would never have anything to do with what in Germany was called a “peace of conciliation.” He repulsed the idea as fatal. If things were going badly he contended that any steps in that direction would be interpreted as a sign of weakness. When the situation was favourable for Germany he was indignant at the mere suggestion of any conditions except those which he knew the Allies would never willingly accept. Thus he left no middle path between a sweeping success or a crushing defeat; and as he could not wrest the victory the end was inevitable. But it is typical of Ludendorff that when he knew he had lost he seemed surprised that the Allies would not negotiate on the same basis as when the result was in doubt.

It was logical that when a man of such enormous self-confidence as Ludendorff did, momentarily, lose faith in himself, the fall should have been stupendous.

Then his imprecations against the Government turned into supplications to the Socialists who had recently joined it. The account of his meeting with the Cabinet at Berlin on October 17th, 1918, makes curious reading, especially if one compares it with his statements a few months earlier. Turning to Scheidemann, he said, "Cannot your Excellency succeed in raising the morale of the masses?" To which the practical Scheidemann replied, "It is a question of potatoes." While a few minutes later Ludendorff remarked, "The question is to know what to do. I can only repeat my request. Take the people in hand (*empoigner*). Raise their morale! Cannot Herr Ebert do that? That ought to succeed."

Ludendorff himself had played his last card. Two weeks earlier, when the magnitude of the disaster dawned upon him, he had completely lost his head. For some days he sent urgent messages, begging the new Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, to ask for an armistice without an hour's delay. Prince Max had at first resisted these demands, and it was only on October 5th that he finally yielded. During this period the G.Q.G. had sent Colonel Bauer to Berlin; and he is said to have asked various personages to have Ludendorff removed on account of his nervous condition.* At this meeting, however, Ludendorff was less agitated. But he had nothing to propose. The Chancellor felt forced to remind him that he had created the situation by which the country was then faced. "Your Excellency knows that I did not

* This incident is related by Professor Delbrück, whose statements of fact may always be relied upon. He asserts that it was told to him by those to whom Bauer made the request. (See Ludendorff, *Peint par Lui-même*, p. 130.)

approve of the first Peace Note; but I was told then that each hour was costing the lives of thousands and thousands of men, and that every moment might lead to a catastrophe."

But Ludendorff, formerly so emphatic, could suggest nothing, was vague in his replies to definite questions, and could only repeat idle rumours that the internal situation in England and France might change the whole aspect of affairs.* This finally led Solf to say that, after having listened to Ludendorff, he found it even more difficult than before to advise the Chancellor.

The truth was that Ludendorff's rôle was finished. He had exhausted the Empire. He had drained it of men; and, as he admitted, he could do nothing further unless he was given more troops. The details which led to his resignation a few days later are relatively of little importance.

Since the Armistice—or, rather, since his return from Sweden,† whither he first fled—he has devoted himself to asserting that the army was not defeated, and that the High Command was stabbed in the back by the Social Democrats.

Ludendorff's own statements made during the events, and before he became an apologist and an advocate, speak for themselves. A commander who says his army can do no more, that catastrophe will overtake it unless there is an immediate armistice, and, in an access of despair, that the only hope of saving the country from invasion is by a *levée en masse* (for,

* Ludendorff was always impressed by the wildest reports. He recounts seriously that at Scapa an English officer told a German torpedo-boat commander that England could not have carried on the war for fifteen days more.

† Ludendorff's mother was a Swede.

incredible as it may seem, Ludendorff did for a moment consider that wild scheme), has already admitted defeat, while the proofs are abundant that what provoked the revolution was the dissolution of the army, which the High Command had for four years promised the country would pass through the Brandenburger Tor as conquerors, and not the revolution; which led to the decomposition of the German forces.

Although the German High Command exercised throughout the war, and more especially from the day when Ludendorff arrived at G.Q.G. in 1916, a political influence unknown in any other country, yet it would have been more logical to have given it the dictatorship. To-day Ludendorff's greatest regret is that that was not done. He examines his conscience as to whether he was wrong not to become Chancellor himself. But he realised that he could not be in two places at the same time, although he could not see anyone else fit to take his place in either. "The work that I had to do was enormous. In order to conduct the world's war I was obliged to know thoroughly the instrument used. That alone exacted an extraordinary amount of labour. I could not think of also taking the direction of the Government. . . . Lloyd George and Clémenceau could be dictators, but they were not obliged to occupy themselves with the details of the direction of the war. Germany certainly needed a dictator. . . . It was not the fear of responsibilities which kept me back, but the fact that I realised that in this world war a single man could not at the same time lead the people in the interior and the army at the front."

But he remarks that in August, 1916, it would have been perfectly possible for the Supreme Command to have seized the dictatorship. He adds: "The Supreme Command, with the assent of the Emperor, ought to have taken possession of the dictatorship in the place of the incapable Government."

One can only speculate how far, and whither, Hindenburg and Ludendorff would have conducted their country had they thus taken into their own hands all the powers in the State. But certainly no officials having any political training or education could work with Ludendorff. His colossal ignorance of the world at large, his absolute lack of foresight, his obstinacy in refusing even to recognise realities, made that impossible. His energy was quite in keeping with his arrogant egotism, but his competency lagged far behind.

The former first Quartermaster-General often expresses his deep admiration for Bismarck. But it may safely be said that Bismarck would have had no sympathy for Ludendorff's doctrine. The Iron Chancellor held in special detestation soldiers who wanted to entrench upon the field of politics, and he would never have tolerated the aggressions of which Bethmann-Hollweg was the victim. Bismarck's strength lay not in his violent outbursts—most of which were calculated for effect—and in his brutality, but in the fact that he thoroughly understood his age and generation, even if he did not entirely approve of them. He demonstrated that when he said, "Europe won't stand any 'cock of the walk' business." Ludendorff's crying defect was that he was entirely out of touch with his time. Like Hindenburg, he

thought that the way our Government controlled the country during the war was an admirable object lesson for Berlin. He never understood that the result was obtained because a people unaccustomed to military service, and whose previous liberty made the restrictions of war-time all the more onerous, knew that it was the civil and not the High Command which controlled its destinies.

Ludendorff may be called a great Prussian, but Bismarck was a great German. There lay all the difference between them: and the one destroyed the Empire which the other had built.

The account between Ludendorff and the German people has yet to be settled. His place in history remains to be fixed. But for us he is the man who demonstrated a theory. It is curious that the three greatest European countries engaged in the war should have illustrated different systems. In Germany the High Command more or less controlled the policy of the country. In France, until M. Clémenceau became Prime Minister, parliamentary commissions and sometimes doubting War Ministers got in the way of soldiers and occasionally impaired confidence in commanders. But, upon the whole, we can fairly say that while Haig never interfered in politics Lloyd George gave him a free hand. He did not have great confidence in him, he would have liked to have got rid of him, but he never embarrassed his operations.

From the nature of things friction between the civil and military authorities is inevitable; but the principles laid down and adhered to by Mr. Lloyd George during the war were sounder than those preached or practised in any other country.

CHAPTER V

SPAIN IN WAR-TIME

BRITISH diplomacy, which was triumphant in many fields during the war, was not seen at its best in Spain. That country, by reason of its geographical position and its comparatively lengthy coast-line, was bound to be in an uneasy position as a neutral.

Germany had long foreseen and had to some extent provided for the eventuality. Several German banks had been established in Spain many years before 1914, although it was only after the Armistice that British banks thought it worth while to go to the Peninsula. There was a large German colony which in certain centres, and especially in Barcelona, took an active part in the commercial life of the country. One way and another, Germany was strongly entrenched. But there was one personality too far above all manoeuvres to be affected by them, but sufficiently keen-sighted and quick-witted to anticipate the result. The King of Spain was neither surprised nor dismayed by the sentiments which at one time dominated the majority of his subjects. His own predilections (despite his Austrian descent) were well known; and if he ever hid them at all it was only to the extent necessary in order not to handicap the humanitarian work which he carried

on for more than four years. At his own expense he maintained an organisation which, as many have cause to know, relieved much anguish amongst families who had missing or captured relations.

It is no secret that upon the outbreak of hostilities Don Alphonso notified the French Government that they need not keep one soldier on the Spanish frontier. What is less well known is that the King actually made a suggestion that he should himself lead in the cause of the Allies a force to be called the Army of the Alps. The main condition was that these troops should be absolutely independent of any control by an allied commander. The proposal was declined ostensibly on account of that stipulation, although I am inclined to believe that in any event there might have been other insurmountable difficulties. It is also questionable whether the King would not have encountered some opposition from his own country. Although the admiration in which he is held, even by his political adversaries, is such that he probably would not have been balked in carrying out a plan which was so much in keeping with his characteristic personal courage.*

The German Government had no immediate desire to bring Spain into the war; and all the less so because she was at first convinced that it would be of short duration. Moreover, it was realised that, as belligerent, Spain would be obliged to defend her own borders, which, even apart from the difficulties of transport, would have allowed her to furnish few, if any, troops for any other Front. At best she would

* As I refer hereafter to various conversations in London and elsewhere with the Spanish Ambassador, Señor Merry del Val, I should state that my knowledge was derived from another source.

have created another Front and thus have kept some allied troops busy. But if she then had been defeated, the last state would have been worse than the first, as the resources of the country would then have been in the hands of the French. Therefore, what Germany wanted and expected to be able to produce was an atmosphere of benevolent neutrality which (amongst other benefits) would obscure a few submarine bases. She knew that she was better fitted to cope with that situation than was France, while she rightly thought that Great Britain would not make the most of her opportunities.

It would be futile to deny that throughout a large part of Spain there exists a certain latent dislike of France and of the French. It is an ingrained sentiment which has its roots firmly implanted in former generations. In Spain there is no newspaper press which permeates the population and which magnifies the present at the expense of the past. Memories are longer than in countries which can boast of a more extended system of education. The happenings of a century ago linger more freshly in the Spanish mind than do events of twenty years ago in Anglo-Saxon lands. A small Spanish proprietor is likely to be more familiar with some details of the Peninsular War than is the average English farmer with the mighty contests between Disraeli and Gladstone in the seventies. It is therefore not remarkable that in a country where the cult of tradition is bred in the bone the legend of the Napoleonic days still subsists; the story of how the Spanish dynasty was ousted to make way for Joseph Buonaparte, and how the army was dispersed throughout Europe and brigaded with the

French troops. Still less forgotten are the various disastrous interventions of France in Spanish affairs during the course of the nineteenth century, while the question of Tangier has long been and remains an open sore. In brief there was small reason to expect any spontaneous sympathy for France.

Towards England, and equally for traditional reasons, the feeling is quite different. Unfortunately we did not seem to know how to profit by it. Our treatment of Spain throughout one period of the war was typical of our ignorance of, and our indifference to; the annals and the affairs of continental countries. Sometimes we complained because Germany was making use of the Spanish coast and of isolated Spaniards for her submarine work. There never was any serious allegation or even any suspicion that the Spanish Government was a party to these proceedings.

But the contention was that, being neutral, it should have prevented their occurrence, those who advanced this argument being serenely oblivious to the fact that we, as combatants, were at the very same time unable to prevent our own Irish coast being utilised by Germany in precisely the same manner. Always there was a too ready inclination to aver that Spain was hostile to the Allies. If that view was correct it should have accentuated the need of a consistent and discreet direction of public opinion; propaganda—if one must use a word which has been so abused as to become distasteful. But, in fact, the situation could not be summarised so concisely. There were many conflicting elements, many which wavered at the outset, and some which wavered to the very end. One certain factor throughout, from August,

1914, to November, 1918, was Alphonso XIII. No constitutional ruler, reigning in a country which wished to become neutral, could have gone further in his devotion to the cause of the Allies. No other actually did go so far.

Equally pronounced in his sympathies and (as his position allowed him to be) more outspoken was Count Romanones. There were other Spanish statesmen who did not seek to conceal that they hoped for the victory of the Allies. It might also be added that some of these were more absolutely and singly Anglophile than Romanones, who, unlike most Spaniards, is also sincerely attached to France. But amongst them all Romanones was conspicuous, because he was obliged to leave office on account of a too strenuous pronouncement in favour of the Allies.

In 1914, and later, the army was Germanophile in the sense that it thought the Central Powers would certainly win. But the origin of this feeling was professional rather than political. In Spain, as elsewhere, the German army was considered to be the most perfect military machine which the modern world had yet seen. The Spanish General Staff admired it as such.

The Church was largely, although not unanimously, in favour of the Central Powers. Its attitude was based upon that of the Vatican, which, under Pope Benedict XV, sympathised with those whom it considered were the champions of a strong authority against the inroads of democracy.

The mass of the people—at least in 1916, when they were making money—only had the desire not to be drawn into the struggle. Any more personal sentiments differed greatly in the various provinces.

Society and the Court were slightly Germanophile at the outset, and became more so until it appeared doubtful whether Germany would really be the conqueror. The King's boutade in the worst days is well known: "In Madrid only *la canaille* and myself are pro-Ally." But it was partly our own fault that things ever came to that pass. Our best friends in Spain warned us of the danger and showed us how it could be averted. We ignored all such advice rather contemptuously. Then when the inevitable happened we were surprised—and grumbled.

The politicians never saw any significance in the Spanish situation. That is not extraordinary. Almost without exception, they were, in August 1914, blissfully ignorant of foreign countries and foreign affairs; and as they could not learn everything at once, it would have been too much to expect them to spend much thought on a country which was taking no active part in the war. I never heard those in office refer to Spain at all except in the tone of a police constable irritated by the propensities of unruly boys. For instance, a brilliant member of the Government, whose conversation sometimes becomes more forcible as dinner proceeds, told the King in no chosen words that Spain evidently did not realise her true position; and that as she could do nothing it was absurd of her to foster any illusion about being able to obtain admission to the Peace Conference. Whilst this statement was undoubtedly unwelcome, it was the objectionable manner in which it was made that excited the comment of the Spanish statesman who recounted it to me a few days later. This incident did us little good and is remembered to this day. I

naturally asked what the King thought of such remarks at his own table, and was told that he smilingly said that he knew the culprit of old, and realised that he would have spoken more diplomatically before dinner ; while I recollect a member of the Cabinet, to whom I happened to mention the activity of the German Embassy in Madrid, saying, with cheery confidence : " Well, we've sent Westminster there. He'll feed the men and flirt with the women, and that's all they want."

Germany, however, made all there was to be made out of the situation. Certain elements were in her favour. The Spanish Ambassador in Berlin was personally more favourable to the Central Powers than to the Allies. In Spain itself Germany controlled an energetic Press ; and the enterprising A.B.C. seemed to be entirely at her beck and call. The thousands of Germans who were obliged to remain in Spain when the war broke out, reinforced as they were by many who then quickly crossed the frontier from France, served their government unofficially—as Germans are taught to do even in days of peace. The efforts we made to counteract this campaign were by no means negligible, but (except in respect to the Secret Service) they were not very successful. The worthy bearer of a name honoured for generations in the history of English journalism—Mr. John Walter—showed more devotion than discretion during the many months he laboured in Spain. The hectoring tone of the Northcliffe Press, whenever it referred to that country, certainly did not facilitate his task. But in any event he was thought to be in closer relations with the leaders of the Left than was consistent with his duties

in a neutral country. I am unaware whether there was any sound foundation for that belief. In any event, Mr. Walter may have thought that that group would soon be in power. But a propagandist whom an existing government regards as being too friendly with its opponents is temporarily deprived of his usefulness. He is gambling on the future. In this instance it was a disastrous course to take.

Many others less well known gave their services to the same cause. Sometimes the comic element was not lacking even in those tragic days. It will be long before Spanish society forgets the doings of an English novelist, whose intentions were as excellent as his talents in a certain sphere are undeniable. But it had not been his lot in life to move amongst the great of this earth ; and when the King and Queen, wishing to mark (as they generally did towards members of the various British Commissions) their appreciation of work done for the Allies in difficult surroundings, showed him a certain degree of favour, he entirely lost his head. The disease was progressive. But when he finally ignored existing usages to the extent (at Santander, if I remember aright) of stopping and joining the Queen in her daily walk and of telephoning to ask the King to come to luncheon, it was found necessary to halt antics which up to that time had caused a certain amount of harmless amusement.

Taken as a whole, the work done in Spain was intermittent in its intensity, and entirely lacking in cohesion. This was probably due to the fact that throughout the war the British Embassy was moribund. Sir Arthur Hardinge was a man of pronounced intellectual accomplishments and some

diplomatic ability. But it was his misfortune to be entirely miscast in the drama which was then being enacted. The German Ambassador, Prince Ratibor, a Silesian magnate, was not himself an opponent of high calibre, although not one at all to Hardinge's delicate taste. But he had several daughters who kept the family average at a high figure,* while the moving force of the whole Embassy, and the director of the innumerable agents which it employed, was its Military Attaché, whose feats were said to have ranged from attempted corruption in high quarters to sending boxes of poisoned sardines across the border to Frenchmen whose removal would have been useful.

Sir Arthur was well fitted to adorn and enjoy the calm and stately existence which was the lot of diplomats in Madrid before 1914. But he was ill fitted to hold his own in the turmoil which was thus created, while he was further disgusted by the division in Spanish society, which left the friends of the Allies in a minority. He took the course of practically shutting himself up, performing his official duties, but holding aloof from nearly everything else.

There is undoubtedly much to be said for the dignity of such a line of conduct. But in result it was ineffectual, precisely because it was negative at a time when an affirmative course was highly important. It was no fault of Sir Arthur's that he was unsuited for the post. Elsewhere he might have been of great service, and probably would have been much happier. But in Madrid he was kept throughout the war, despite the discreet admonitions to the Foreign Office, which from

* See also p. 55.

time to time crept into the Press, not to mention the many more private and more pressing warnings which were received in Downing Street. There can be no doubt that it was a grave mistake. It was said that the person chiefly responsible was Sir Arthur's brother—Lord Hardinge—who was then Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but who persistently turned a deaf ear to these complaints. I am unable absolutely to affirm the truth of that suggestion ; although I do not hesitate to say that, if Lord Hardinge is responsible, he did no good service either to his country or to his brother. But what I can state from my own knowledge is that even after the war the best friends of the Allies in the Spanish political world, Count Romanones, Señor de Osma and others—who were also, I believe, very friendly to Arthur Hardinge personally—bitterly regretted (as will be seen from extracts from my diary given in the next chapter) that we had insisted on retaining in Madrid an Ambassador who made the worst, instead of sending one who might have made the best, of an awkward situation.

The attitude of the Spanish Government throughout showed a leaning towards the cause of the Allies. Only forty-eight hours before war was declared, Great Britain, France and Spain were to have signed an agreement about Tangier. During the years which followed, Spain occasionally pressed Downing Street for some favourable settlement of that vexed question. The Foreign Office invariably referred her to France. Spain did try from time to time to make some arrangement with the Quai d'Orsay, but never took the slightest advantage of the situation as she

was occasionally in the position to have done. Indeed, at one time, when the German troops were carrying all before them, Spain, of her own accord, chivalrously suggested that the negotiations should be suspended on the ground that it was no time to press such a question.

M. Pichon, when French Minister for Foreign Affairs, once said to me that England could easily satisfy Spain and settle the whole matter by giving her Gibraltar. Leaving aside the fact that we would thus be paying for another, I was later put in a position to tell M. Pichon, upon high official Spanish authority, that any sentimental satisfaction which might be obtained from regaining Gibraltar would weigh as nothing against the material advantages which she would derive from a decision of the Tangier puzzle in accordance with her aspirations.*

I happened frequently to meet the Spanish Ambassador, Señor Merry del Val, and heard his views of the effect of the war upon the future of Spain—and other matters. His opinions usually bore testimony to his ancestry—Latin intuition tempered by Anglo-Saxon caution. Apart from the still more celebrated Cambons—Paul and Jules—I can think of no other family which in this generation has produced two brothers of such diplomatic acumen and repute as the Spanish Ambassador to the Court of St. James and the Secretary of State to Pius X. I recollect the latter many years ago, before he got his Hat, as one of the handsomest

* Some time after the war (I write from memory and am unable to give the exact reference) I was surprised to read that so distinguished an authority as Mr. Walter Harris, for many years the *Times*' correspondent in Morocco, expressed the belief that the cession of Gibraltar would be a solution satisfactory to Spain.

men of his day. He gave the impression of using an excessively calm exterior to conceal the workings of a feverishly active brain ; and I have always imagined that, despite his many brilliant qualities, his intellectual keenness must have been a trial to that peace-loving Venetian peasant, Pius X.*

I see by my diary that on Good Friday, 1918, I "spent the morning in Grosvenor Place with His Most Catholic Majesty's Ambassador." It was a little later that Señor Merry del Val began to tell me of the King's ardent desire that Spain should be represented at the Peace Conference, whenever it might take place.

Quoting from my diary :

July 26th, 1918.

Lunched with Señor Merry del Val. He leaves next week for Spain, and again urged me to come to San Sebastian to meet Dato (Minister for Foreign Affairs); he says that Spain is misunderstood here because most people think that she is pro-German. He repeated to me the King's saying, that if he is not at the Peace Conference table, he will be on top of it or under it. The truth is that Spanish pride may be hurt if that wish becomes known and is denied—irrespective of the basis on which it rests. This might help the German interests, which are already assembled within the borders of the country to await the conclusion of the war. The King of Spain has always been more

* The Comte de San Martino recently wrote of Pius X. : " Il a dû accepter comme Secrétaire d'état à la suite d'événements assez compliqués le Cardinal Merry del Val, dont l'intransigeance est bien connue." It would have been interesting had Signor de San Martino revealed the circumstances which led to this appointment. Presumably they were connected with the Austrian veto of the election of Cardinal Rampolla as the successor to Leo XIII.

pro-Ally than the great majority of his people; and has also by his personal intervention relieved an incalculable amount of useless human suffering. But these are titles which it is difficult to capitalise in order to make out a case for admission to the Peace Conference. I pointed this out to Merry del Val, adding that perhaps the ground might be taken that Spain was the greatest Catholic neutral country, while her admission would at least bar the claim which the Vatican was making; although, as I have said, I could not expect him to agree with me on that latter point. Nor did he.

After some conversation I finally agreed that I would go if I thought I could serve any useful purpose by making the position clear, but that it would be useless for me to do so unless the Prime Minister knew, approved, and saw fit to tell me his views with liberty to communicate them frankly to Dato. Señor Merry del Val said that he had been trying in vain for about two months to see Mr. Lloyd George, and was obliged to go to Spain without having done so. I told him that I thought I could get an opportunity to discuss the matter with the Prime Minister, but that it was equally likely that I would be told to do nothing.

July 27th, 1918.

Breakfast at Eaton Place with Henry Wilson. He seems very satisfied with the general situation. But the nearer military success seems to come the more doubtful he gets about the use the politicians will make of it. I told him about my conversation with Merry del Val. Rather to my surprise, he is anxious even at this late date to bring Spain in on our side ;

although he realises that it would probably not go further than a formal declaration of war against Germany. I had meant to go to Paris to-morrow, but he asked me to wait a few days so that he might arrange for me to talk about the matter to Mr. Lloyd George.

Wilson then showed me the W.O. report—M.I.C. 5—which he asked for after our last conversation. This certainly interested me.

July 31st, 1918.

Lunched *chez* X to meet the Prime Minister, as arranged by Henry Wilson. No one else there, Wilson having been unable to come. The conversation was chiefly about foreign affairs. The P. M. said he could not see any prospect of Spain being at the Peace Conference unless she came into the war; and that even that might not be agreeable to the French, and especially to-day, when they were so confident of the result. He talked about Clémenceau's fierceness and gruffness, and laughingly said that his disappearance would certainly make the Versailles Conferences pleasanter meetings. Pichon's devotion to Clémenceau he likened to that of his own terrier to himself. (The "terrier" comparison was rather inapt as applied to Pichon. A spaniel would be nearer the mark.) He agreed that if Clémenceau were to disappear, Briand would probably succeed him, and expressed great admiration for the latter's ability, while admitting his temperamental laziness. He told me that Clémenceau had objected to his seeing any of the French statesmen with whom he had previously acted during the war, quite forgetting that he had worked with some of them as long as, or longer

than, with Clémenceau himself. However, so as not to irritate the latter, and in consideration of his age, he had given way on the point, although he had still kept up his relations with Albert Thomas.

Mr. Lloyd George asked me what I could tell him about André Tardieu, who, he said, tried to take a leading part at the Versailles meeting last month. He likewise questioned me about Woodrow Wilson, concerning whom, however, I could tell him nothing, except a story recounted to me by a former Princeton professor, that it had always been customary for the President at Princeton and all the staff to meet at certain fixed intervals, when they discussed University affairs freely between themselves, but that when Wilson became President, while the meetings were continued, he himself took no part in the conversations, kept the others at arm's length, and would simply say that he had decided to take a certain course.

I also mentioned his falling out with Colonel George Harvey, who probably did more than anyone else to make him President, and added that upon the whole it did not seem unfair to say that he was intellectually arrogant. Mr. Lloyd George remarked that he would like to see a meeting between the pedantic Wilson and Clémenceau, and that it would do the former a lot of good. He said he was a great admirer of Theodore Roosevelt's, and thought that the Republican party had made a great mistake not to nominate him instead of Charles Evans Hughes, who was so dull that there must be surely some mistake about his Welsh origin.

We spoke of the House of Commons, and the P. M. said that he considered Gladstone the greatest

parliamentary orator, with the possible exception of Chatham, but admitted that it was difficult to judge the latter as only fragments of his speeches were left. But despite this praise, he spoke somewhat coldly of Gladstone as a statesman.

I mentioned that one could get more good things, more things which could be used to-day, out of Disraeli's than out of Gladstone's speeches. He agreed ; and said that Gladstone's sentences as delivered were very involved and often were barely grammatical ; that one could study his debating power at its best in his replies, which were generally impromptu. He was four years in the House of Commons with Gladstone, but came after Bright's day.

He said he thought that the two greatest parliamentary tragedies were the careers of Disraeli and Joseph Chamberlain ; Disraeli's because he arrived too late in life, and Chamberlain's because he died too soon. Both parties had treated Chamberlain badly ; and, as a matter of fact, " the highest post he ever occupied was one held to-day by a man of the calibre of Walter Long." He recalled that he had disagreed violently with Chamberlain about the South African war ; but said that they were later drifting towards each other, and that he believed that, had Chamberlain lived, they would have been working together before now.

The P. M. gave an amusing account of a conversation he had recently had with the Duke of Westminster (who is now in Spain). I think he said it was the first time they had met ; but, anyhow, he mentioned that in one way the origin of their acquaintanceship might be said to be his (L. G.'s) famous Limehouse speech.

Coming back to the question of Spain, he spoke of the policy which the Vatican had pursued, and said that the Pope's desire to be at the Peace Conference would remain ungratified. He stated clearly his own view as regards Spain. That no more than any other neutral would she be admitted to the Peace Conference. What would happen if she actually declared war against Germany would be a different question. However, it evidently did not greatly interest him, and he clearly considered it rather a matter for the French. When I asked him specifically what to do he said: "Certainly, accept Merry del Val's invitation and see Dato in San Sebastian. But don't forget to see Pichon on your way through Paris."

On the other hand, a matter in which he did take some interest, and about which he requested me privately to get him what information I could from those in office in Paris, was the French view about his having a general election in England. I rather gathered that there had already been some conversation about it, and that the French had shown that they thought there should not be one here until they could also have one, presumably because otherwise the British representatives at the Peace Conference might seem to have more authority.

Paris. Tuesday, August 6th, 1918.

I saw Lord Derby to-day. He is greatly opposed to the idea of a general election in England, because he believes that that will almost force the French Government to have an election, which might be disastrous. I think he exaggerates this point. Amongst French politicians, Derby is chiefly impressed by

André Tardieu, Loucheur and Claveille. I hear from French sources that he makes a good deal of Loucheur.

Wednesday, August 7th, 1918.

There is general satisfaction regarding the result of the Malvy trial. It is rightly thought that a more severe penalty would have made a martyr of him.

Countess B., who is at present in Switzerland with her sister—who is the wife of the German General commanding Coblenz—has written to Paris that the German High Command now admit amongst themselves that they cannot win.

In French Government circles there is some complaint about a man at our Military Permit Office who consorts with French Socialist politicians. I am told his name is H——.

Clémenceau was irritated last week by a proposal, said to have been sent by our Government, and which they themselves withdrew the next day, that the number of English and French Divisions should be reduced on account of the number of Americans who had arrived.

There is some criticism and some curiosity about the exact extent of Cave's peace conversations with the German representatives whom he met when he went to the Hague to arrange about the exchange of prisoners.

Thursday, August 8th, 1918.

Spent the morning and lunched with Paul Doumer—who has just lost a third (I think his last surviving) son at the Front.*

* No, his youngest son survives.

Doumer has, as a Senator, been sitting in the High Court which tried Malvy. They expect to have the Caillaux matter put before them in the next few days. He assures me that there is no doubt that Caillaux will be convicted and that the penalty will be much more severe than in the case of Malvy. He says that the evidence is undoubtedly there, while the attitude taken by the various Senators during the secret debates in the Malvy matter showed clearly that they would convict Caillaux.

Doumer, who is the President of the Senate Commission of the Army, said that the English were to a large extent unjustly blamed for what happened in March, because the reserves, instead of being, as promised, where they could be put in immediately, were stationed in some towns at a considerable distance. He said that Foch himself admitted the mistake, but added that he was powerless in the matter. (At that time Foch was not in supreme command ; he only became so after the St. Quentin disaster.)

I put before Doumer the following facts or conjectures about the Spanish question. Both Spanish pride and their desire for some material advantage make them want to be at the Peace Conference. They certainly at present have no status for being there. On the other hand, if they are disappointed in this, they are likely to throw themselves into the arms of the Germans, who already have large financial and commercial interests in Spain and are only waiting until after the war to develop them. This is all the more important because, if we are going to have tariff wars, it means that we shall have bitter commercial enemies. It is therefore desirable to have some of the

neutrals on our side. Moreover, anything which tends to strengthen the Spanish Monarchy is useful to us, and especially to France, for internal disorder in Spain—Bolshevism of any kind—would be a perpetual source of danger to France; and nothing can strengthen the Spanish Monarchy at present more than the prestige to be gained by Spain being at the Conference.

On the other hand, there is the natural query of what Spain would want. The question of Tangier cannot be discussed, and we neither would give Gibraltar, nor—as X had assured me—would they even say thank you for it. It would, therefore, be interesting to know what they themselves could propose, and, in the general interest, to attach them to the Allies if it could be done without paying too big a price. Of course, as a preliminary, Spain would have to undertake—as the greatest neutral Roman Catholic country—to make it clear to the Vatican that the latter could not expect in any way to be represented at the Conference. Somewhat to my surprise, Doumer entirely agreed in all the above and approved of my going to Spain in accordance with Merry del Val's request.

So far as Doumer represents French opinion, it does not bear out the view which L. G. told me he thought was held in France about Spain coming in at all. On the contrary, they seem to recognise that Spain, and the situation in Spain, has been the cause of a great part of France's troubles since 1800 (and even before) and fully realise the importance of having her firmly attached to the Allies before the war is over.

In the afternoon I spent two hours at the Place

Beauvau with M. Pams, the Minister of the Interior. (Curiously both Pams and Doumer have, in their day, been unsuccessful candidates for the Presidency of the Republic—Pams against Poincaré and Doumer a number of years ago against Fallières.)

Pams, who, as Minister of the Interior, knows most about the internal situation of France, assured me that a general election in England would cause no trouble here. He admitted that possibly all parties would rather there was not one, and that a certain Socialistic group would make what they could out of it to try to force one here; but he said that it was entirely a question for England to decide herself, and assured me that any agitation in this country would not amount to much or do the Government any harm.

Like Doumer, he said that the idea of an election in France during war-time was out of the question; that conditions were entirely different to those that prevailed in England; that it was impossible to have French soldiers under arms voting, and that out of a population including women and children, of about 40,000,000 when the war broke out, 7,000,000 voters out of a probable total of 18,000,000 had since been called to the colours, and that the balance would not in any sense represent the country.

I also discussed at length with Pams the question of Spain. Even more strongly than Doumer he was of the opinion that it was most desirable that something should be done quickly to satisfy Spain. Moreover, he thought that the proper way was to get some expression of opinion unofficially from Dato and the Prime Minister. He said that he considered it essential for France to be absolutely tranquil about Spain

during the period of reconstruction after the war; that a great deal of France's trouble during the last century, from the days Napoleon invaded Spain until 1870, had come from lack of a proper understanding with that country, and that he thought it most important that something should be done now. He added (what, of course, he could not say in public) that, republican as he was, there were two countries in which he did not want to see a Republic—England, because the present form of Government there could not be improved on, and Spain, because that would undoubtedly do harm to France.

This statement was all the more surprising because Pams is almost an extreme republican, and in no way one of the semi-moderate type as is Pichon. Pams also has a certain connection with Spanish affairs in that his native country is near the Spanish border. It is very near Catalonia, and he therefore always takes the Catalonian and the Barcelonian side against that of Castile. In fact, he committed a great "gaffe" two or three years ago when, being in Barcelona with some other French deputies, he sent a telegram to the King of Spain in the Catalonian language. The King was raging, and told the French Ambassador that he had a great mind to send a reply in German.

I then discussed with him the question of X, which was decidedly less interesting and more unpleasant. He took it very well, said he would do all he could, and asked me to see him again about it on Saturday.

Monday, August 12th, 1918.

Saw M. Pams at the Place Beauvau on Saturday,

when he said that he had looked into the R. matter and would do what I had asked him, though the departmental official who was in charge of such matters had already rejected the request when made by R.'s lawyer. He added that Doumer and others had told him that I was "un bon ami de la France," and that he was glad to be able to oblige me.

He certainly did oblige me by his action ; and I am very grateful to him both for what he did and the way he did it. Nevertheless, I had a shock yesterday, for the Versailles people sent to R. saying that they would not wait any longer. I protested that I had already got the matter arranged for R., but, not unnaturally, they did not pay much heed to that. I asked R.'s doctor to intervene, but he said that he had done all he could in the matter and evidently thought that I was a crazy Englishman to imagine that I could get it stopped. As a last resource I telephoned to the Place Beauvau hoping that I might find Pam's Chef du Cabinet there, although it was Sunday afternoon. To my surprise I was told that "Monsieur le Ministre" was actually in his office. He quickly reassured me, said that the necessary orders had already been given, and agreed to let him speak to the Versailles people, who then withdrew with many apologies. So that is finished, and I go to San Sebastian feeling relieved. I had to give some kind of personal undertaking about R., which I was glad enough to give.

Have had a long conversation with M. Pichon. I was somewhat surprised by the strong stand which he took about the Spanish question. Some of my friends at the Quai d'Orsay had told me that the Govern-

ment view was that it was advisable to do something about Spain, but, nevertheless, I was not prepared to hear Pichon speak so plainly.

I put before him the two main facts, namely, the commercial advantage to all the Allies to have Spain on our side after the war, and also that it would undoubtedly be in the interest of France in particular to satisfy Spain, so that she could be perfectly tranquil about her neighbour. I pointed out that nothing could strengthen the Monarchy in Spain so much as some recognition, while nothing could weaken it so much as the hopes of the King and country being disappointed in that respect, and that the fall of the present régime would undoubtedly mean—not a stable Republic, but a period of Bolshevism, which would have its repercussion in France.

Pichon cordially agreed, especially on the latter point, which he developed considerably. He said that of course France would not do anything about Tangier, but that he thought it should be possible to find another way of satisfying Spain—that the difficulty was that Spain herself would not advance any other proposal, and that it would be a great service if anyone could aid her in inducing her to do so or could ascertain any views she had on that point.

He said he would give the necessary instructions about my passport. It appears that the Spanish Frontier is really absolutely closed and that they let practically no one through.

We then talked about the possibility of a general election in England before the end of the war. He said that he hoped that there would not be one because he thought the Prime Minister might run some risk,

and it would be better to maintain his present safe position than to take the slightest chance. He remarked that that was his sincere reason for the view he held ; adding that, if it was a question of an election or anything else being necessary in order for the Prime Minister to keep in power, he would be in favour of it, the main desire of his group being that nothing should occur to put Mr. Lloyd George out of office before the end of the war.

Nevertheless, if an election was not necessary for his safety (and Pichon thinks he is safer without it), they would rather there was not one, because that would place Mr. Lloyd George in a position somewhat stronger than that of M. Clémenceau, inasmuch as the former could say that he had a direct mandate from the country, whereas in France the life of Parliament would have been only artificially extended.

This view—the desire that, if possible, there should be no difference in this respect between M. Clémenceau and Mr. Lloyd George—is somewhat more widespread than may be imagined. In respect to Pichon, who, of course, is only the echo of Clémenceau and others of the same type, such a feeling is perfectly loyal and has not in it a particle of small feeling. That remark does not perhaps apply to all M. Clémenceau's entourage.

Am sending a report of this conversation to Henry Wilson in compliance with L. G.'s request.

Speaking of S., Pichon said that the French Government felt that he had been very useful ; that for nearly three weeks Haig had resisted Foch's wish that he should undertake the recent offensive, and that

it was S. more than anyone else who had brought him round to Foch's view.

I had no idea that S. played such an important rôle ; but did not comment on the incident, except to point out to Pichon that Haig probably had troubles of his own with L. G. The fact is that all French politicians feel that L. G. neither likes nor has very great confidence in Haig ; and that knowledge produces a rather undesirable atmosphere.

Wrote Sir Henry Wilson as follows :

*Ritz Hotel,
Paris.*

August 1st, 1918.

DEAR SIR HENRY,

I expect to leave for Spain in two or three days. In fact, I have received two telegrams from Merry del Val, who is in San Sebastian, asking me what day I would arrive.

I had long conversations with several members of the Cabinet here, and other politicians. They all agree that some arrangement should be made with Spain before it is too late, and they all seem to be in accord with the following points :

(1) Nothing can be done in regard to Spanish desires, either in respect to that country being at the Peace Conference or obtaining anything else otherwise, unless she makes it worth while to the Allies by some arrangement with them.

(2) In any event, any discussion of the question of Tangier would, as a *sine qua non*, have to be excluded.

(3) That being so, it is for Spain to say whether, being unable to get Tangier (as a matter of fact, she does not want Gibraltar), she will "boulder" like a spoilt child, or will propose something else which the Allies can consider; in other words, it is for Spain to say what she does want.

(4) It is in the interest of the present dynasty to do this, because the King's desire to be at the Conference is now so well known that his failure to obtain that or any other concession would have a weakening effect on the Monarchy; whereas nothing could strengthen the Monarchy so much as the satisfaction, both of the pride and the material desires of Spain, by something being obtained.

(5) This is also in the interests of France. Republican as France is, the one country in which it is certainly not in her interests to have a Republic is Spain. Bolshevism, or anything approaching it, once let loose there, would have its repercussion in France. (I may say that all French statesmen heartily concur on that point.) As one "homme d'état" said to me last week, a great part of the troubles of France in the last century, from the days of Napoleon down to the time of the Morocco question, came from the fact of France's mistakes about, and bad understanding with, Spain.

(6) The main reason why France could not give up Tangier (because it provides the through road to Dakar, and thereby the shortest through route) is also a strong reason for being on good terms with Spain, as there then could be a through route by railway, although that would mean that Spain would have to change her gauge.

The Prime Minister said the other day he thought that there might be some feeling in this country against an arrangement with Spain. I believe that exactly the opposite is the case. By the way, at that luncheon he asked me the explanation of the more friendly attitude recently shown by the Vatican towards England. I told him that I had reason to believe that it was because they thought England would agree to their being at the Peace Conference and that it only remained to settle with France and Italy. I received a curious confirmation of that in a communication I have received from one of my correspondents in Rome ; I enclose herewith a translation of part of same. As a matter of fact, the Vatican believes that, although there are difficulties in the way of succeeding in that enterprise, yet they can overcome them all provided they can get rid of Sonnino, who is their greatest stumbling-block in respect of that situation. Possibly our friend would be interested in the extracts.

Paul Doumer, who is the President of the Army Commission of the Senate, has invited me to go to the French Front with him on my return from Spain, in order to meet Pétain, and I hope to have the time to do so.

I am,
Yours sincerely.

San Sebastian. August 17th, 1918.

Arrived here late this afternoon. First time for about two years I have been in a country not at war. It is a curious effect of war-time customs that at dinner I first thought the absolutely white bread, which I had not seen for so many months, was some special

Spanish confection. The number of private gorgeous motor-cars was also a wonderful sight.

San Sebastian is a noisy place, partly on account of these very motor-cars, which go hooting through the streets as if they were on the point of bursting. The feeling that it is a place where there is no tranquillity is also to some extent caused by the late hours—everyone dining at 9.30 or 10 p.m. Anyhow, in one way and another, it is as continually noisy a town as I have ever been in, barring that most *bruyant* of places, Barcelona, where there is never a moment when all the world is asleep.

San Sebastian is at the height of its season—every room in every hotel taken. But there is nothing approaching the *chic* nor the life which one used to see at Deauville, or even (of a different kind) at Aix. It is true that this year there are few foreigners—the French frontier being strictly closed. The express which left Paris on Friday night made a very long train, including two *wagons-lit*, and every place was taken; but of all that number, the only ones to cross the frontier were an Attaché of the Italian Embassy and myself. The frontier has now been closed in this way for several months; and, rightly or wrongly, the French are said to attribute a considerable part of the success of the last offensive to the fact that in that way France was kept clear of spies.

But if all that is to be seen at the hotels, restaurants, the Casino, and other public resorts seems rather bourgeois, there is, on the other hand, a diplomatic society, of which the nucleus is the various embassies which make San Sebastian their summer headquarters.

By the way, it is not uncommon, although to me it

now sounds curious, to hear German spoken in the streets and elsewhere; although that is not so strange as what happened at Berne, where, as Arthur Stanley recently told me, members of the German and Austrian and the Allied Legations dine at the same table d'hôte—of course, without speaking a word to each other.

There are amusing rumours of the gambling exploits at the Casino of the Duke of Westminster and F. E. Smith, who, however, are now both at Santander.

The cost of living here (thirty pesetas for room) is increased for foreigners by the rate of exchange; 100 francs to-day brings 71 pesetas, whereas before the war they were always worth more than 100 pesetas.

San Sebastian. August 18th, 1918.

Went this afternoon to the usual Sunday bull-fight. The amphitheatre, which is beautifully situated amongst the hills, was crowded. The toreadors and the matadors were better than the ones I saw in Barcelona in 1916; but I found the contests less exciting, and the spectators less excited. Certainly, for pure excitement, racing excels bull-fighting; while, if I wanted excitement plus brutality, I would choose a prize-fight any day in preference to a bull-fight.

San Sebastian. August 20th, 1918.

Long conversation with Merry del Val, who said that Dato would see me as soon as the series of Cabinet Councils, now being held at San Sebastian, was finished. He wants me to wait until then because the decisions they now take may have an important bearing on the future. They are meeting here to consider the

question arising out of the continued sinking of Spanish ships by Germany. A strong Note was sent to Berlin some days ago, but it has now been publicly announced (although it is not the truth) that no Note was sent, but that the Spanish Ambassador was told to notify the German Government that, if any further ships were sunk, a proportionate amount of German tonnage in Spanish ports would be seized. Merry del Val says that about 20 per cent. of the total Spanish tonnage has been sunk since the war began, and that the subsequent shortage may affect the question of the supply of coal, already at a fabulous price.

He begged me to speak with the same frankness to Dato as I had to him. He agreed that Spain must now make up her mind fully what to do, and more than half agreed that, if she could not get Tangier, it would still be better to negotiate upon some other basis rather than not be ranged on the side of the Allies after the war.

F. E. Smith, who has been staying here for a few days with the Duke of Westminster, told me of the conversation he had with the King when he went to play tennis at Santander last week. He said that he told the King plainly about the policy which Spain must pursue—that there is no chance of her being admitted to the Peace Conference, etc., etc. A good deal of plain talking, but, in my opinion, only likely to do harm. Moreover, his remarks showed an utter disregard of the fact that it is the French, and not we, who are obliged to live next door to the Spaniards. (My subsequent information confirmed my impression that this conversation had done more harm than good.)

San Sebastian. August 21st, 1918.

Lunched with Merry del Val. He told me that F. E. Smith had spoken to him with the greatest respect of Lloyd George's commanding ability, which Merry del Val rightly took as a sign of the times.

By the way, it is remarkable and regrettable that Lloyd George is so inaccessible to Foreign Ambassadors. Merry del Val told me that before leaving for Spain, he wrote asking to see Lloyd George, but never got even an acknowledgment of his letter.

I remember that, nearly two years ago, Nabakoff, whose dispatches to his Government decrying Lloyd George had not then been published, told me that he had been vainly trying for a number of months to get an interview with the Prime Minister.

Drove all the afternoon with Merry del Val, who explained to me at some length the absolute difference in character between the Basques, the Castilians, and the Catalonians.

I commented upon the difference between France and Spain—that here one never meets any impoliteness nor are there any disputes of the kind so frequent in France, as, for instance, with taxi-drivers, etc. Merry del Val agreed, but said that Spaniards did not think it worth while to dispute about trifles, but when they fought, it was always seriously, and sometimes to the death—more often than not, about a woman. But he mentioned that the Basques rarely used a knife like other Spaniards, but settled matters with their fists.

San Sebastian. August 22nd, 1918.

Spent the morning with M. Thierry, who for so long was at the French Embassy in London, which he

left to come to San Sebastian when his father (who is very ill and has sent me a message regretting he cannot see me) was appointed Ambassador some months ago.*

Thierry said that he missed English society; that the Spaniards were very ceremonious, but were not very hospitable.

He mentioned that the German Military Attaché was the brains of the German Embassy, but that his conduct was disgraceful; that, for instance, they had proof that he had sent poisoned sardines and other comestibles to people in France.

7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Interview with Señor Dato, Minister of Foreign Affairs, leader of one wing of the Conservative Party, and former Prime Minister. Dato, who formerly practised at the Bar, is a man of very quiet manner and extremely precise in his statements; but he speaks French so badly that I thought at first that he did not understand me on account of not knowing the language well. But I soon observed that it was his atrocious accent which made it hard to comprehend him and that grammatically he spoke fair French. His clarity of expression is such that, when on several occasions he broke into Spanish, I could more or less follow what he said.

After having explained to Dato that I had no official position and did not in any sense represent anybody officially, I went over, at some length, the general ground—the fact that even if nothing could be done about Tangier, Spain would gain nothing by throwing herself in the arms of the Germans; that the Allies

* M. Thierry died a few weeks later.

would probably be willing to consider some other basis, and that nothing would strengthen the Monarchy so much as some arrangement with the nations which were victorious in the war. He replied that it was all very well for the French to say that nothing could be done about Tangier, that that was simply to ignore the whole question, as there was no other possible *terrain*; that, for instance, Spain would not say thank you for a part of the Cameroons.

He mentioned that the recently-appointed Ambassador to France was at present taking the subject up with the Quai d'Orsay; that there had been similar conversations some time ago; but that during the difficult days of March and April these had been suspended at the instance of the Spanish Government, which had intimated to the French Government that it did not wish to embarrass France at such a period.

I interjected that it would be regrettable if such a chivalrous proceeding should in any way prejudice the position of Spain, as His Excellency seemed to suggest might be possible; but that, while I knew that Spain had approached the question of Tangier (both in London, where our Foreign Office had always made it clear that it was a question for France, and in Paris), I was unaware that at any time France had given any encouraging reception to these overtures. Dato admitted that, upon the whole, this was so; he referred vaguely to some suggestion made by France (I believe that it was really made by General Lyautey, who is not now so anti-Spanish as he once was) some time ago, but as being one which France could not carry out without the assistance of England.

I remarked that one difficulty about Spain's case

was that she had yet to show that she was now entitled to more concessions about Tangier than she had a right to expect before the war.

In reply to a direct query which M. Dato put to me, I said that, so far as I knew, it would be an illusion to hold out hopes about Tangier, although there was, I believed, in France as well as in England, a desire to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of Spain and (even in Republican circles in France) to strengthen the position of the Monarchy; and that it was well understood that some recognition of Spain would undoubtedly have that effect.

Referring to the Peace Conference, Dato said that they would not regard the exclusion of Spain as a very friendly act, but that, nevertheless, if the Allies declared before the Conference that the Conference would not touch on any matters which would affect the interests of Spain, then, of course, they could not in any way protest, and would accept the situation gracefully.

I replied that while there was certainly no disposition to open the door to neutrals, that if the matter were put in that way—a claim to be present if the interests of Spain were to be discussed and possibly affected—I imagined that in England at least there might be some popular sympathy for such a contention; but that putting the case on that ground made it too early for any pronouncement, as a declaration such as he had indicated might be made at any time before the meeting of the Conference, which, anyway, was not yet in sight; but that I felt bound to add that, fair as a request for such a declaration might at first sight appear to be, it was probable that the

decisions of the Conference must necessarily more or less directly affect neutrals, and that that could hardly be a good reason for opening the door to all of them.

Dato replied that the case of Spain stood on a special basis. The reason he gave in support of that statement did not seem to me to be very strong. (As a matter of fact, the gist of the whole question is this : if there is any reason for giving any recognition to, or doing anything for, Spain, it is not because she has any right to it on account of anything she has done, or not done, but simply because in the long run it will pay us to act that way.) I put it to Dato, however, that if Spain broke off diplomatic relations with Germany, it might be possible then to contend that she was in a different position to any other European neutral, but that I thought that even then importance should be attached, first, to the time at, and the manner in which the rupture came, and, secondly, to the firmness with which Spain acted afterwards.

Dato then spoke at length about Spain's friendship for England. He said that Spain would never do anything which might embarrass England's relations with France, and that, for her own part, she even wanted to be able to submit any claims or requests she had to England, as to a great friendly Power, which would tell her if she thought them excessive.

Upon the whole, two points were clear to me : Spain does not feel assured of fair treatment by the French, and wants to rely upon England as much as possible ; secondly, Tangier is the one thing she does want, and she has not yet given up all hope.

In view of these two facts, I thought it proper to again impress upon Dato that England would always

regard Tangier as being exclusively a question for the French, and that, in my view, it would be futile to expect any pressure to be brought by us on that point.

At the end of the interview, Dato asked me to wait a moment as he had arranged for Romanones to come to meet me. Count Romanones, the Minister of Justice in the present Government, is leader of one wing of the Liberal party, and, like Dato, was formerly Prime Minister. In fact, he had to resign because he expressed too soon and too clearly his sympathy for the Allies.

Romanones is undoubtedly the more interesting personality in Spanish politics. He comes of a great family, but a family which has lost its fortune, which was remade by the father of the present generation. Romanones has several brothers, who have large financial and commercial interests in Spain, and he himself is said to be an excessively shrewd man of business. He is painfully lame and deformed.

Count Romanones is in every respect a great contrast to Dato. He speaks excellent French, and talks very quickly and with great animation. He was particularly interested in everything about Mr. Lloyd George. He wanted to know his exact age; whether the pictures one saw in the newspapers looked like him, what he was like in ordinary conversation, whether witty, or quick, or otherwise; and, above all, what was likely to be his political future. When I gave him my guess on the last point, he was greatly surprised and intensely interested. "Vous croyez? Vraiment, est-ce possible?" And that was the question which he came back to and talked about at

great length at the subsequent interview I had with him. He also wanted to know what would be the result of a general election in England, and was amazed that it seemed likely that we might have one during the war.*

San Sebastian. August 23rd, 1918.

Lunched with Merry del Val. In resuming the interview I had with Dato I pointed out that of two things one must be true : either Spain had acted in the war in such a way as entitled her to special consideration as a neutral, or she had not. If the latter, it was difficult to see how she could be treated differently from the other neutrals. But, if the former, it was regrettable that the facts supporting the case had not been made sufficiently clear.

Merry del Val insisted that on many occasions Spain had at least gone to the very limit of neutrality in order to assist England—question of mending the cable, for instance.

As a matter of fact, it is worth while noting that while the population of Spain is now 20,000,000 and her man power for industry after the war is untouched, she has gained in the war 400 million pounds ; that is the figure which Dato himself gave me. This is all well known to the Germans, who are lying in wait to do business after the war with Spain, as one of the few countries which they have a chance to get on their side commercially.

In the present Government Romanones is, of course, the strongest supporter of the Allies. I think that Dato is probably equally strong on that side, but his opinions were formed later than Romanones'.

* See page 143.

Maura is also pro-Ally ; Cambo and Alba are doubtful ; certainly Alba was at one time pro-German. I understand that Cambo was also, but he is very ambitious, and not over-scrupulous ; in fact, his ambitions are likely always to over-ride any principles he may have, and, therefore, he will want to be on the winning side. Cambo's great aim at present is to form a new party.

Dato sent me a message, repeating the remark he had made at the end of our interview, viz., that he hoped that after having gone home to England I would return to see him again.

But over and above that point (which touches all the Allies) there is the fact that after the war it is desirable that France should have a period during which she should not be obliged even to think about her neighbour ; in other words, a period during which perfect tranquillity in Spain can be relied on ; and it is obvious that nothing can strengthen the Spanish Monarchy so much as some recognition by the Allies, while nothing will weaken it so much—and thereby possibly let loose a state of Bolshevism (which would certainly be the result for some time after any attempt to form a Republic), if the hopes of the King and nation are absolutely deceived.

I believe that the Spanish feeling is at present about as follows : They are convinced that the Allies are going to win, and they much prefer to be on the winning side, even leaving apart any question of sympathy ; but if the Allies are going to treat them without any consideration—if, for instance, they are going to be dealt with in the manner indicated by a recent leading article in the *Times*—they will throw themselves in the arms of the Germans, *faute de*

mieux. In other words, they do not want to be left between the two, and not be considered as close friends by either one side or the other.

I believe that at present they would like to see Germany break off relations. They do not want to do it themselves (partly because the country is not prepared for that action, and they do not want an outcry from newspapers like *A.B.C.*), but it would suit them if, on account of their seizing German tonnage when Spanish boats were sunk, the German Government should break off relations.

I can see nothing to be gained by irritating or cutting Spain adrift at present. I do not say that that might not possibly one day be the only course, but in any event, that could always be done later; and in the meantime it is, I think, a great mistake to follow the course indicated by the articles in the *Times*.

Further, I believe that once Spain (or at least the Government) is absolutely convinced that nothing can be done about Tangier, but that the Allies really want to do something in another way, an agreement might be arrived at. I failed to obtain any statement of anything else which might be considered satisfactory. I do not believe that it is impossible to obtain such a statement, if the matter is kept clearly on that basis, and something more than the few days I had at my disposal is given to the task.

Finally, if the Allies arrive at anything this way, it will, I think, be through Romanones. I think that is so not only on account of Romanones' well-known devotion to the cause of the Allies, but because he is by temperament and business training, a man of expediency, knowing the end he has in view—co-opera-

tion with the Allies after the war ; if he finds that it is impossible to arrive at it one way, he will be inclined to co-operate in advising another.

Summing up the situation in Spain seems to be as follows : The King is, and always has been, absolutely and whole-heartedly in favour of the Allies. Moreover, not only has he wanted them to win, but throughout he has been certain that they would do so.

The Army is to some extent pro-German ; but very much less so than when I was here last—eighteen months ago. The same, in a lesser degree, may be said of the Church. The country as a whole, if not pro-Ally, is, at least, rather pro-English. Romanones is strongly pro-Ally. His father was a man of good family who inherited no fortune, and who, therefore, was obliged to take a small Government post. Upon marrying a woman of some means, he embarked upon various enterprises and made a considerable fortune, which has been largely increased by his sons. The present Romanones is a rich man. He is devoted to politics ; but one of his brothers does nothing but look after the numerous business enterprises of the family. Romanones is impetuous to the verge of being indiscreet ; and it was his too open expression of sympathy with the Allies—the feeling that Spain should take their part more openly—which led to his downfall when Prime Minister, something more than a year ago.

Maura, one of the leaders of the Conservative Party, is an entirely different type. It is said that when he first arrived in Madrid he had for some time to sleep on the benches of the public parks. He is a lawyer, is noted for his uprightness, and for many years has

had a large practice. He is excessively *autoritaire*, and it is that phase in his character which led to a breach with the King which has never been entirely healed.

Dato was formerly Maura's chief lieutenant, but a few years ago, when the King asked Maura to form a Government, he laid before Don Alfonso a paper outlining certain reforms which he thought necessary, together with an undertaking that the King should support him to the end to get them. The King was in favour of the reforms in question, but demurred to signing the undertaking—pointing out that, as a constitutional Monarch, he could not undertake to support Maura unless the latter maintained a parliamentary majority. Maura then disappeared for some days, leaving no address, and purposely hiding. In this dilemma the King persuaded Dato to take office. When Maura returned, he accused Dato of traitorous conduct, and the party split in two factions. Dato is an able, honourable, but somewhat weak man.

I should have stated about Maura that he understands little about foreign affairs; but that he has a son upon whom he relies greatly in those matters, and who bids fair to be one day Minister for Foreign Affairs.*

The Republican Party, or what remains of it, pretends to be pro-Ally. It has always been composed of the riff-raff of Spain, but until recent years its leaders were men of some standing. Now the leaders, like the followers, are people of no repute.

The last election settled the fate of this party for

* See p. 191 referring to conversation I had with Maura's son in 1919.

some time to come, and all the more so because Spain is, and always has been, monarchical at heart.

The Carlists are, for their own reasons, pro-German. Their influence is small.

Spain still hopes to get Tangier. The matter has been broached both in London and Paris several times since the war began. In Downing Street the answer has always been that it is a matter for the French to decide. At the Quai d'Orsay, Spain has never got any encouragement on this question. To-day there is less hope than at any time since the war began ; for Clémenceau is not considered to be friendly ; it is well known that at one time he had a certain difference with the King.

Curiously enough, the Spaniards consider Pichon their greatest friend amongst French politicians. I am unaware how much actual ground there is for that belief. Of course, Pichon is always moderate ; but he is not a man of any great initiative, and is, in every sense of the phrase, " Clémenceau's man." The French politician whom the Spaniards hate most is Caillaux, on account of the way he insulted the King by his telegraphic dispatch some years ago.

The failure of Spain to get Tangier will not in any way affect their feeling towards England, but it is less certain whether that would be so if Spain was not freely admitted to the Peace Conference. Apart from this source of irritation, there is the material point that the Germans now have millions of pounds invested in Spain, as well as large numbers of Germans waiting to begin operations there after the war. It is very doubtful whether we have done, or are doing, what is possible now to put ourselves in a position

to guard against this in time. As regards our propaganda in Spain—the less said about that the better.

We made Russia think, or allowed Russia to be made to think, that we favoured an autocracy in Russia ; and to a large extent we have created the impression in Spain that we want to see a Spanish Republic.

Paris. August 24th, 1918.

Got back from San Sebastian this morning. Regret to see in the *Times* a leading article referring to Spain, that it is vain of her to have any illusions about any consideration being accorded her.

Paris. August 26th, 1918.

Long conversation with Lord Derby at the Embassy. He stated he understood that X had caused trouble in Spain, and quite agreed with the view I took about the situation.

Afterwards, long interview at the Quai d'Orsay with S. He returned only a few days ago from a Conference in London, and was enormously surprised at the rôle played by Northcliffe. He tells me that at the meeting at which Balfour himself was present, Northcliffe made a speech outlining what the policy should be, and actually introduced, or had introduced by one of his people, a resolution condemning Sonnino, and indirectly praising Orlando. S. very properly objected, and stated that it was none of their business to pass resolutions about Allies, and the matter was dropped.

Paris. August 28th, 1918.

'Phone message came from War Council at Versailles

requesting me to go to the office of the Allied Mission to speak to London by their private telephone. It appeared that L. G. wanted to know the truth about a certain point referred to in my memo. regarding Pichon's feelings about a general election in England.

Paris. August 30th, 1918.

Clémenceau is still raging about the man-power question. He has recalled de la Panouse because he thinks he has no backbone and is sending as Military Attaché in his place Corvisart, who at present commands a Division at the front. Corvisart (who is a descendant of Napoleon's famous doctor) has been chosen by Clémenceau exactly because he thinks he will be energetic on this subject, and I believe that he has given him very strict instructions.

Clémenceau is infuriated by L. G.'s recent suggestion about a reduction of the English and French Divisions which, as Clémenceau very fairly pointed out, would give an enormous preponderance to the Americans next year.

Cambon will dislike immensely this change in his official family. In the first place, he never likes to have either strong or energetic people in his *entourage*. One only has to look at the present Embassy to see that. Anyway, Cambon once said: "What I want is servants, not associates." Moreover, he has always been very friendly with the de la Panouses, and dines with them practically every day. The French are critical as usual.

The dispatches at the Quai d'Orsay show that President Wilson is at present getting on much better

with them than he is with Downing Street. He has taken a great liking to André Cheradame, who is at present in America, and is more inclined to take his advice than anyone else's about European affairs.

Paris. August 30th, 1918.

Corvisart was chosen to succeed Panouse precisely because it was thought that he would be energetic on the man-power question; the latter Clémenceau always thought useless in that matter. The truth is that this man-power question is Clémenceau's pet grievance; while any suggestion of reduction of divisions (such as recently made) infuriates him. I understand that to one of his intimates he referred to it as an election device.

I suppose that Downing Street knows who is the Frenchman who is at present so largely in President Wilson's confidence, and to whom he seems to have taken a great liking.

Paris. September 2nd, 1918.

Lunched at the Embassy. Lord Derby, Lady Stanley (who does the honours as Lady Derby has not come over), Lady Margaret Scott, Mrs. Paget, a young French woman, Lord Reading, General Lambton, the Italian General who is on the Versailles War Council, and three or four others.

Was between Lord Derby and Lambton; the latter reminded me when we last met, in February, the day he came out of hospital, when he and his brother-in-law, Lord Durham, were lunching with Mrs. Rochfort Maguire. Lambton has vastly improved since then, but I should not think it likely that he would

ever be fit for active service again. Halfway through lunch he surprised me by asking me where X was, saying he had called at the Ritz in vain.

General Spiers and his wife dined with me at Larue's.

Paris. September 4th, 1918.

When, some two weeks ago, the Spanish Government intimated to the German Government its intention about seizing ships, the Spanish Ambassador in Berlin (who has been there for about twenty years) sent a message to Señor Dato stating that he would rather resign than see Spain following in the wake of the Allies; to which Dato replied that he, for his part, would rather follow the Allies than be a satellite of Germany.

As a matter of fact, I understand he did resign, but I am unaware whether he was made to withdraw his resignation, or whether it is simply being held in abeyance.

Long interview with Paul Doumer. He told me how the late Czar (of whom he had a higher opinion than is general) once predicted to him that a Polish kingdom would cause more trouble than all the Balkans.

Spent a couple of hours in the evening with Repington, whose rooms at the Ritz are next to mine. I told him that Clémenceau was replacing laPanouse in London by Corvisart. He had not heard it, rather disbelieved it, and asked who Corvisart was. He spoke of the danger of our reducing our effectives as L. G. had suggested; and said that it might result in a French-American ultimatum to England on the manpower question. Repington mentioned that some day

he meant to publish his side of the Henry Wilson-Robertson controversy.

September 5th.

Am returning to London to-morrow. Upon the whole, I do not think that Spain will risk the internal dissensions which might follow a rupture with Germany. Neither the French nor English Governments will, at this stage, really regret her not doing so; and the future alone can tell whether Spain herself will have reason to be sorry.

CHAPTER VI

SPAIN IN 1919

IN June, 1919, I spent some weeks in Madrid. It was interesting to note the satisfaction or regret which then prevailed in the various political parties regarding the stand which Spain had taken throughout the war.

I quote from my diary :

Paris. June 6th, 1919.

Long conversation with M. Jean Dupuy, proprietor of *Le Petit Parisien*, and a member of several former (and doubtless of some future) Cabinets.* M. Dupuy is one of the most astute of French politicians. Hard-headed, tenacious, and sufficiently *rusé*, he combines with those qualities a gift of expression which is lucid to the verge of brutality.

Upon the whole, he takes a dark view of the future. He said that France could not possibly "tenir tête à ses engagements"; that although the economic outlook was temporarily better than in England, it was far from being hopeful; and that the only chance for either country was a closer commercial connection with our creditor, the United States. I suggested

* He died a few months after this conversation. One of his sons M. Paul Dupuy, is to-day Senator and also, with his brother, the active director of *Le Petit Parisien*.

that to achieve that we would have to prove to the latter country that she would be the gainer, and that until America had herself passed through the bad period it would be difficult to do so, except by the very plea which Germany would doubtless soon be using for the Allies—that it was good policy to save one's creditor. I added that the situation would probably be further complicated after the next Presidential election, as the Republicans would doubtless return to power and the great manufacturing interests would demand an even larger measure of Protection. Dupuy did not at first follow this point and asked me to repeat it, which I did, while he made a note. I gathered that he was not very familiar with the American political situation.

He spoke about the allegation that France was not taxing herself heavily enough. He remarked (and with reason) that it was all very well to impose an income-tax, but that in France tradition was so opposed to any direct taxation that it was quite impossible to collect it as in England. A fair proportion might be got in in the great commercial centres; but in the agricultural districts, Normandy for instance, the proprietors simply ignored it, or paid what they liked, and that any drastic steps would only lead to riots. He also doubted whether any part of the country would stand inquisitorial methods. In brief, he thought that although direct taxation was admirable and more honest than any other kind when practicable, yet that it was futile to rely upon it in a country where the majority was opposed to its principle.

I suggested to M. Dupuy that in the coming years France would suffer from communistic labour troubles

less than England, for the division of the land was, in the last analysis, the greatest safeguard against anything of that nature, and the Revolution had settled that question for all time so far as France was concerned. To this he agreed ; and added that even before 1789 the number of small landed proprietors was much greater than anyone nowadays seems to think.

We had some conversation about various people in England and France. Dupuy spoke highly of Lloyd George's skill in getting his own way in negotiations ; but said that, although he was a supreme political tactician, he was too much of an opportunist to be called a great statesman. While having little first-hand knowledge of most of our people, he was inclined to rank Lord Milner as our nearest approach to a great *homme d'état* ; but added that the tendency of the times was such that Lloyd George appeared to the fullest advantage, while we probably only got half value out of Milner's abilities.

Dupuy ended by saying, somewhat solemnly, that he could not foresee any daylight for his country ; her financial burden was too crushing, and he would despair were it not that he knew that France could never sink.

Barcelona. June 10th.

Arrived here two days ago and am leaving for Madrid this evening. When I was last in Barcelona—September, 1916—I spent most of the time with Estaben de la R., who died so suddenly a few hours after I left.

Madrid. June 13th.

Lunched to-day with Don Guillermo J. de Osma.

Señor Osma, who must now be well over sixty years of age,* not only speaks English fluently and without any accent, but he has a vocabulary which most Englishmen would envy. He was at Oxford (Pembroke College) in the early seventies, and took a First ; being, so he told me, the first Roman Catholic (which rather astonished me) and the first Spaniard (which didn't surprise me ; I doubt if there have been many since) to get a degree there. It was curious to hear this Spanish statesman talking about Pembroke having been head of the river in a certain year—in his own time, I think. At Oxford he made friends with Maurice de Bunsen, who, years later, was our Ambassador here. Asquith was at Balliol during the same period. Osma did not meet him then, but when Asquith was in Madrid a few weeks ago they passed hours together, chatting about the Oxford of half a century ago.

Osma is really more cosmopolitan than Spanish, and is, I believe, so regarded here. In fact I am told that he speaks Spanish with a slight English accent. After being some time in the Diplomatic Service he engaged actively in political life ; and for twenty-nine years (and, indeed, until a few weeks ago, when he became a Senator) he represented the same constituency in the Cortes. He has always been held in the greatest respect, for it was generally recognised that he had no material objects in view and that he was not an unduly ambitious politician. The extent of that respect was once curiously shown when it enabled

* He died in 1921.

him to pass a certain measure, which was generally unpopular, but which it was thought must be right and necessary because Osma contended that it was so. Incidentally, the law (I forget what it was) proved to be a great failure.

For a number of years Señor Osma was Minister of Finance. To-day he is *Président du Conseil d'État*, a post usually filled by a former Cabinet Minister. His time is now, however, almost entirely taken up in arranging the collections made by his wife (who died last year, and who was an American by birth) and himself—tapestries, furniture, china, coins and some books—and in enlarging his house to store these treasures, which are being made over to what is called "The Osma Foundation." According to the deed of trust, one of the trustees must always be a certain official of the British Museum. The deed also provides that the annual report must be sent to the Chancellor of Oxford University, and that in the event of a failure on the part of the trustees to do that, or otherwise conscientiously to carry out the trusts, everything reverts to Oxford absolutely.

The house was in such disorder on account of the building work that there was little to be seen of the collections, and what little was visible—tapestries and coins—was not such as I was able greatly to appreciate. But I did appreciate Osma's conversation, which was abundant and varied. As he turned from one subject or from one country to another he was constantly getting up to read me extracts of letters he had written or received (incidentally, I admired the precision with which a correspondence extending over many years had been arranged).

Although we lunched at one o'clock I did not get away (or want to) until after five o'clock; thereby being too late to go to to-day's bull-fight, which was no great loss.

Osma is a close friend of Maura's, who is also one of the trustees of his Foundation. However, the former is not much interested in the present political situation. Referring to the days of the war, he affirmed that the tendency of Spanish society would have been entirely different had we had another Ambassador, and especially if de Bunsen had been here; but that Arthur Hardinge, although a man of great charm, lived in the moon. Osma said that when he once asked our Foreign Office why they kept Hardinge in Madrid, they answered that he wrote such amusing dispatches and letters; which is a typical Foreign Office reply, but not necessarily the Foreign Office reason.

When speaking of the active propaganda of the Germans who had remained in Spain, Osma showed me as a laughable curiosity one of the first publications which they issued here. It begins with a proclamation made by the Kaiser at the commencement of the war, wherein he is made to say that "having been accustomed to commune with Almighty God since the earliest days of my reign, I now find it unnecessary to ask His guidance in the great task imposed on me by my enemies"—a truly delicious misprint.

Osma told me about Caillaux, when he was last in office, requesting Lord Bertie to ask our Government to abandon the Morocco Conventions. Lord Bertie said that he would transmit the demand, but that he did not for one moment imagine that the British

Government would accede to it. Some ten days later, being at a *chasse* at Rambouillet, and finding himself at the same *poste* as Caillaux, Bertie told the latter that he had had a reply which, as he had anticipated, was in the negative. He added that, in order that there might be no trace of the incident which might cause future embarrassment, he had sent the query in a private letter to Sir Edward Grey. Caillaux, then in his arrogant days, fell into a fury, and blurted out that it was a good thing that France had two strings to her bow. Then, seeing he had gone too far, he quickly added: "Mais entendons-nous bien, M. l'Ambassadeur; ce que je viens de dire n'est qu'une boutade de Caillaux." However, the *boutade* had its sequence, for according to Osma (who said that he would not disclose to me the source of his information about this episode, but that I could corroborate by looking up Hansard), Grey, when speaking in the House of Commons a few weeks later, in February of that year, upon some question affecting Agadir and the purchase of a number of horses (I can't imagine how they came together) said: "Fortunately Great Britain has no need to have two strings to her bow." Of course only Caillaux and Bertie knew to what he was alluding.

I had spent the morning with the Marquis de Valdeiglesias, the director of *L'Epoca*, a Senator, a follower of Dato, and a firm friend of England. As we could not finish our conversation before luncheon, he asked me to dine with him at his club.

Valdeiglesias explained to me some obscure points about the present political situation; and also the

position of the Catalonian matter, as to which he confirmed what I had heard elsewhere.

The Catalonian trouble is really a regional or racial question. Of course the prevalent English idea that the political conflict in Spain is between Monarchists and Republicans is entirely erroneous. The Catalonians are the most hard-headed of the various races which make up the Spanish population. Commercially they excel all the others; and, apart from the Basques, are the best men of business.

When they come to Madrid to get, for instance, powers to enlarge the harbour of Barcelona, the delays and the easy-going methods, which are so characteristic of Castile and Andalusia, exasperate them. All this leads them to say, and with some reason, that if they had self-government they would get such matters done more quickly and satisfactorily. In brief, they are well aware—perhaps too well aware—of their own superiority in certain respects; and are a little too fond of asserting it. But they also know that if there ever was an actual separation they would lose the free market of the rest of Spain—the market which to-day makes them rich.* It is therefore questionable whether many Catalonian leaders are sincere Separatists; and whether many would not be unpleasantly surprised if they were suddenly given what they now ask.

The largest and best organised of the various political parties in Spain are the Liberal-Conservatives. Since 1912, however, they have been divided into two groups, one led by Maura and the other by Dato.

* Some of the new countries created out of the Austro-Hungarian Empire are to-day barred by tariff walls from their former capitals.

This party is really Conservative although not reactionary, as is shown by the vast amount of social legislation which has been enacted during the reign of the present King, and for which it is largely responsible. I do not think it is generally known that in Spain suffrage is direct and universal for the Lower Chamber, and indirect for the elective part of the Senate, although it can be exercised by every Spaniard of twenty-one years of age who can read and write. Moreover, education and the vote are compulsory.

Next, going towards the Left, is the Liberal Party. It also is divided into two groups. The one which is to-day the more numerous is led by Garcia Prieto, who was recently made a Grandee of Spain, with the title of Marquis d'Alhucemas.* Count Romanones is the leader of the other group, which, however, was reduced to about fifty members at the last election.†

Next toward the Left are the Reformists, who are neither very numerous nor very fixed in their opinions, although upon the whole they lean toward a moderate form of Republicanism.

Then comes the Republican party, which includes in its ranks everyone of anti-Monarchial views, ranging from the mildest republican to the wildest revolutionary. The present head of this party is Señor Lerroux, who is ready to go to any length to overturn the throne. There are a few Socialist members, but there is no real Labour party.

The agricultural population is mainly conservative

* The only political position which is conferred by a Grandeeship comes from the fact that part of the Senate is hereditary.

† The division in the Liberal Party no longer exists; Romanones is to-day Minister of Justice in d'Alhucemas' Cabinet.

in its instincts. This is a natural consequence of the fact that present proprietors are numerous throughout about two-thirds of the country. On the other hand, the Agrarian Problem still remains to be solved in Andalusia, where there are many great estates which sooner or later will have to be cut up.

The successive deadlocks, which are such a marked feature of Spanish political life, are not due to any differences between the Sovereign and his people, but mainly to the fact that Spain adopted too soon a system of Parliamentary government which, in any event, may not have been best fitted for so impetuous a race; while the situation was aggravated until recently by the lack of any form of closure, thus enabling determined minority to carry obstruction beyond reasonable limits.

V. repeated to me (and vouched for the truth of) a story, which must have gone the rounds of Europe as I heard it a couple of years ago, about the King having remarked: "In Madrid only the *canaille* and myself are pro-Ally."

June 14th.

I received last night a letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs asking me to call at eleven o'clock this morning. It turned out that his primary object was to give me the facts about the connection of one of Maura's sons with an Austrian Bank; which explained a telegram I got yesterday from Merry del Val, and which I was unable to understand. There had been some comments in the Press about the matter; evidently attempts to embarrass Maura père or to be unpleasant to the Spanish Government

generally. But I fail to see how it is either of any importance or a fair subject for public comment.

I found Gonzales Hontoria the youngest Foreign Minister I have ever met—under forty, I should think. (It appears that he is really forty-three.) I passed nearly two hours with him. He told me the story of his career; how, having been in the Diplomatic Service, he left it some years ago to practise at the Bar, and at the same time began to write political articles, which gave him the reputation of being a pronounced Anglophile. He added that it was a reputation which he fully deserved and that the Duque d'Alba, Señor Osma and himself were probably the three greatest friends England had in Madrid.

Although Hontoria is, I think, a son-in-law of the Marquis d'Alhucemas (still better known as Garcia Prieto) and is personally very close to his Chief in the present Coalition Cabinet, Maura, he does not belong to either of their groups. But he is one of Romanones' followers. He is supposed to know the Morocco question more thoroughly than anyone in Spain, having conducted all the negotiations when he was Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

He told me a great deal that was interesting about Maura, for whom he evidently has a great admiration. He asked me if I would like to have an audience with the King. I answered that, much as I would appreciate it, I supposed that the request should go through our Ambassador Hardinge, whom I did not care to ask. Hontoria said that that was unnecessary; he, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, could arrange it on his own initiative. I was tempted; but (as last year in San Sebastian) thought it better not to accept.

In the afternoon spent an hour with Romanones, *chez lui*. He is no longer in office as he was when I last saw him. As usual he was very incisive and interesting. He was insistent that England and Spain ought to be linked together, not only more closely but in some more formal fashion. He complained that the great bar was the ignorance in England about Spain and Spanish social conditions, and wanted to know if the Press could not be induced to give more attention to Spanish affairs. He alleged that at present English newspapers spoke little and (especially the *Times*) sometimes spoke ill about Spain.

Romanones mentioned that Northcliffe's animus against Spain probably arose from the fact that when he was at San Sebastian, September 1916, he wanted to be received by the King; who, for one reason or another, did not grant the request for an audience.

He said that Hardinge was a man of talent and most agreeable, but that he had not those qualities which alone would have enabled him to hold his own in a neutral country in war-time, and that he had apparently realised his own limitations, as he had simply shut himself up and let things take their own course. Romanones thought it was a great pity, as everything would have been different then, and easier now, had we had a different kind of man here during the war. He asked me about Ralph Paget, who is spoken of as a possible successor to Hardinge, when the latter retires in a few months. I told him that Osma had said to me he hoped it would be Grant Duff, who had once been here as Councillor; and I added that Lord Granville, one of the best men in our Diplomatic Service

would undoubtedly do well; although I thought there was little chance of his getting the post.

Romanones rather surprised me by saying that the influence of the military caste in Spain was still far too strong.

He also contended that the connection of one of Maura's sons with an Austrian Bank was undoubtedly doing the country harm. But that is a line of argument which I find it hard to follow; and I think the importance of the whole matter is greatly exaggerated.

As in San Sebastian last summer, Romanones asked innumerable questions about L. G. I advised him to take the first possible opportunity of meeting the latter, explaining that he governed so personally as Prime Minister, and was so susceptible to personal contact and influences, that it was in the interests of foreign statesmen to know him and to be known to him; and all the more so because L. G. has an instinctive dislike of "la carrière" and generally avoids diplomatists. I might have added that such meetings are also in our interest.

June 16th.

Passed the greater part of the afternoon with Señor de Osma, whose conversation is an unceasing delight. He evidently takes pleasure in recalling memories of his younger days in England. He amused me by telling how, when an Attaché at the Spanish Embassy in London, he used to play the guitar to the wife Henry Labouchere had then recently acquired from the stage.

On my return to the Ritz found cards from the Duque de Ripalda (more generally known as the Marquis de Lema) and the Marquis de Urquijo.

June 18th.

Lunched with X, entirely *en famille*.

They have a pretty wit in Madrid. The new and entirely too ornate post office looks exactly like a church. Consequently it has been dubbed "Our Lady of Communications."

June 20th.

Got a message last night from Gonzales Hontoria asking me to call at the Foreign Office at seven o'clock this evening. When I arrived he told me that he had wanted to leave me free to see whom I liked in the political world without any suggestions on his part, but that, as he heard I was leaving in a few days, he wished to put himself at my disposal, so that I might meet anyone else whom I might care to see. After we had discussed some names, he began to talk about a few other subjects, and I was there until about quarter-past ten, getting back to my hotel rather hungry, to dine about 10.30—which was late, even for Madrid.

Gonzales Hontoria spoke at length about Tangier.* He said that he knew my French proclivities, but was sure I would like to hear the other side. I interposed that the only thing I was "pro" was pro-English; and that, despite my sympathy for France, my views rested largely on my belief that if one had Allies the

* Tangier has always been a source of trouble. Macaulay mentions that after it came to England as part of Catherine of Braganza's dowry, there were complaints about the enormous amounts necessary to maintain and protect, it and adds, "it could in no way promote the national interests: it involved us in inglorious, unprofitable, and interminable wars with tribes of half-savage Mussulmans, and it was situated in a climate singularly unfavourable to the health and vigour of the English race."

proper and the sensible course was to be as close to them as possible. Continuing, Hontoria said that the French allegations about Spanish misrule in Morocco and about the proposed railway to Dakar were neither one nor the other sincere, but made merely for the purpose of producing an atmosphere. He may be right, although I imagine that the truth is betwixt and between. Certainly, I have never had any great faith in the Dakar scheme. It would, indeed, mean a saving in time; but if it followed the coast line it would be enormously expensive to build (probably too expensive ever to be profitable) and the only alternative is that it should go through the desert.

Hontoria also complained about the tone of the French Press on the Morocco question; and showed me several articles as proving his grievance. The fact is that since the Armistice the French Colonial party has been raising its head, and it is always rather disagreeable in its ways.

Hontoria said that Spain would never consent to give up Tangier to France. I remarked that after having studied and tried to understand both the Spanish and French views, I was convinced that the two countries would never in our time be at one on the matter: that if that was correct, one had to "envisager" the whole question from that standpoint; that I thought Spain would be safe (so long as she was able to do her own part in Morocco) in resting on the existing treaties and refusing to discuss any change regarding the rest of Morocco (treaties can hardly become scraps of paper again in a day); and that Tangier would undoubtedly be given an international government. Hontoria replied that he also thought

that that would be the outcome in respect to Tangier, but that that was not a final solution; and that, anyway, international control was never satisfactory, and that we ourselves had discovered that years ago when France was with us in Egypt. I quite agreed in that general opinion of international control, but pointed out that such arrangements were *à la mode*; and added that in any event Spain would be better off that way than if she had only France alone to deal with.

Hontoria predicted that the result would be that the French would constantly be trying to get their own way; and that although England would always see justice done to Spain in any specific instance, yet that in a continuous contest of that kind she could not be expected to give ample support. He evidently feared French pin-pricking.

I reminded him that there was now the League of Nations to fall back upon; and that, although I had no great faith in that tribunal's ability to stop warfare, yet that in such a mixed body Spain was certain to find some adherents. Hontoria then told me (and it was the most curious disclosure that I have heard for some time) that whereas the French Ambassador had never breathed a word about Morocco to him since he had come into office, yet that during that period he had gone to the King, had said that he spoke to H.M. as Governments frequently changed in Spain, whereas the Sovereign was permanent, and that he thought it right to tell him that it would be necessary to negotiate about Morocco after the Peace Treaty was signed, but before the League of Nations was actually constituted or at work. Naturally the King replied that he saw no reason to avoid or evade the jurisdiction of

the Tribunal which the Allies were daily telling the world was to bring so full a measure of justice to the conduct of international affairs. Undoubtedly, the King had the better of this exchange. Incidentally, Spain was well advised to rally as quickly as she did to the League of Nations. She was, I think, the first neutral country to announce her adhesion.

Hontoria then gave me the first clear and consecutive account I have had of the military troubles in Spain. It appears that for many years past the Engineers and the Artillery have each had committees, which both decided questions in which the honour of their corps was involved, and also acted as an intermediary with the Government about all matters affecting those branches of the Service. They also saw that promotion was strictly according to seniority. Hontoria said that the system had worked very well. I suppose that as regards the latter subject he meant that it had been satisfactory from a political standpoint, as avoiding trouble ; for I cannot imagine promotion which entirely ignores merit being satisfactory in a military sense.

The Infantry (of course, by far the largest branch of the Service) had never had such committees. They were constantly threatening to form them, alleging that, through not having them, the interests of the Infantry as a whole were often neglected ; while, on the other hand, individuals were often unduly favoured. This second complaint was intensified by the fact that in recent years the war in Morocco has divided the Army, and that frequently those in Morocco not unnaturally got quicker promotion than those who remained in Spain. The whole question was

brought to a head by a Budget in which it seemed that certain advantages were given to the Engineers and to the Artillery which were withheld from the Infantry. Those who, for various reasons, had long advocated the formation of the committees made the most of this ; and not only were the committees thereupon constituted, but they promptly proceeded to make extreme demands, which it was quite impossible to grant.

The general who had the matter in hand showed great lack of tact, broke off negotiations which would probably have had a successful issue, and arrested the officers who were the chiefs of the committees. It was then found necessary to release these officers, which was, of course, a fatal blow to the authority of the Government. Matters were drifting in this way when the Republicans and Socialists (who, for the first time in their lives, had been praising the military people, saying that they were quite right to form committees), thought that it would be an opportune time for a great strike. They, therefore, quickly fomented one, the immediate result being much disorder and some loss of life. But to their amazement and disgust the Infantry not only quelled the trouble, but in doing so used almost unnecessary severity ; apparently in order that the Socialists might not continue to labour under any false impressions.

During this period there was some conflict in Barcelona between the military and civil powers, the latter taking possession of some prisoners who had been captured by the former. The Captain-General in command, at a dramatic meeting with Romanones (who was then Prime Minister), the Civil Governor, and the Chief of Police, or some similar official, accused the

Civil Authorities of having been lax in the beginning of the troubles and a nuisance since ; and said that unless Romanones ordered these officers to leave Barcelona, he would arrest them, no matter what the Government might say. The Captain-General made no allusion to the committees, but ostensibly was acting on the ground that his own powers had been infringed ; but in reality he was, of course, playing the game of the committees. Romanones was aghast at the prospect of what would have been a conflict of the gravest nature—one which might have led to anything—between the military and civil powers. He ordered the Civil Governor to leave Barcelona ; and he then went himself to the King and said that he must resign, for after what had happened, he could not pretend to have any authority left. (I realise now why, with the memory of this affair still fresh in his recollection, Romanones assured me a few days ago, that the military caste was still too strong in Spain.) It was then that the King sent for Maura (the present Prime Minister), who had never had anything to do with these troubles.

In the result the committees have now got what it is reasonable they should have ; and also the much-coveted regulation that promotion shall be by seniority only. But, on the whole, the feeling amongst the Infantry officers was that they had gone somewhat too far, and they, therefore, got rid of the extremists on the committees. During all the trouble the Infantry committees acted entirely alone. The committees of the Engineers and of the Artillery stood aside, while the Cavalry committees, although they were

formed for the first time during this very period, took no part whatever.

Hontoria said that the Barcelona conflict had been a great scandal. The particulars were known to few people, and every effort had been made to keep them secret, although there was always the chance that they might possibly be brought out in some debate in the Cortes.

He added, in reply to a query I put, that he did not think the King had thrown in his lot too much with the Military Party, or that the latter had now too much power. In this he either does not share or does not like to admit that he holds the same view as his party chief, Romanones.

The truth appears to be that circumstance, especially the Barcelona imbroglio, forced the King to act as he did; that it actually solved the difficulty of the moment; but that the ultimate result still remains to be seen. An army as the prop of the throne has its weaknesses as well as its strength.*

I should add here that X (who can speak with authority) told me that the prevalent sentiment of the military class is one of self-depreciation. That is somewhat characteristic of the race; for the Spaniards are the most modest people in Europe—there is no conceit in their pride. But, over and above that, the Army has never recovered from the effect of the Cuban war, while its work in Morocco has not always been successful. Apart from the consequent depression of *morale*, there is also a general feeling that the

* The strongly-worded speech which the King made in Barcelona later (1922), warning the military groups not to go too far, seems to corroborate the opinion I formed in 1918, as has also subsequent legislation dissolving the committees.

politicians have never allotted the proper amount of money for war material (although, after all, that is the complaint of the soldier the world over) and that what has been given has been to some extent ill spent. But the discipline of the men is excellent, and there is never anything to be feared in that respect.

Gonzales Hontoria gave me some interesting personal details about various people in the political world. Upon leaving I had to thank him with much sincerity for all the trouble he had taken to enable me to see everybody and to hear everything which might interest me—and to hear all sides. I was, as I told him, under all the greater obligation, because, as I occupied no official position, and had no connection or influence with the Press, I could do little in direct return.

I imagine that Hontoria is one of the greatest political assets of this country, and that in years to come (as he is still young) he will do even greater service than in the past; and all I hear about him confirms the impression he made on me.*

Count de la Mortena, Maura's eldest son (following the prevalent Spanish custom, he has taken a title which descended to his wife), called to see me to-day, and stayed rather more than an hour. He is a Deputy; and it is said that, if his father had not been Prime Minister, he would himself have been Foreign Minister before now. He has written several books on political subjects, and was also a delegate at the Hague Conference. But although he is one of the most eloquent orators in the Cortes (no small distinction in a body of which nearly every member is a natural orator), he

* Since 1918 Señor Gonzales Hontoria has again been Minister of Foreign Affairs.

cares more, as he himself as well as others told me, for the study of past politics than for the practice of those of to-day. Nevertheless, he is doubtless destined to be included in future Cabinets. He impressed me as much as anyone I have met here ; none the less so, I suppose, because we were in perfect accord both about the present and about the outlook for the immediate future.

Like Romanones, he complained about the ignorance of England of Spain and all things Spanish ; and said that the majority of those who had written about the country had done so in attacking the Church. We touched upon the possibility of Spain having broken relations with Germany during the war. He thought that it would not have been *chevaleresque* to have done so when it was more or less apparent that the Central Powers were beaten, and that Spain would have been wrong to yield to that temptation. It is at least a high-minded view.

While de la Mortena was with me the Marquis d'Arriluce Ibarra was announced ; and as de la Mortena told me that he was both a political ally and a personal friend, I had him come to my rooms and join us. He is also a Deputy ; but is a very different type from de la Mortena. He belongs to a family which has long been well known and prominent, and also has large business interests in his native town, Bilbao, and many English connections—the Vickers and others being his associates in various enterprises. Both de la Mortena and d'Arriluce Ibarra assured me that the only danger to the Monarchy was not directly from the Left, but from a possibility (though a remote one) of the Right becoming indifferent.

My conversation with de la Mortena very largely went

over the ground already covered by interviews I have had with others. But I was struck by the sober eloquence which de la Mortena showed even in ordinary conversation.

In the afternoon I spent a couple of hours with the Vizconde de Eza, a distinguished economist who was formerly in the Cabinet.* He is now President of the Instituto de Reformas Sociales, a remarkable institution, the organisation and work of which he explained to me.

June 21st.

As I was out when the Marquis de Lema called some days ago, I arranged, through Gonzales Hontoria, that I should go to see him at a time when I would be certain to find him at home. I did so this afternoon, when we talked for a couple of hours.

The Marquis de Lema is a follower of Dato. He was Minister of Foreign Affairs when the war broke out in 1914, and again for a few months in 1917.† He told me that the very day before war was declared the French Ambassador, Hardinge, and himself were putting the final touches to the Tangier Convention—the agreement which has since been left in abeyance. He put at some length the usual case for Spain in respect to Tangier; but said that he did not look forward to anything better than the temporary solution of nationalisation. We discussed the possible influence of the League of Nations upon the future of this problem. I foresee that in the august League

* Le Vizconde de Eza had been in office again since 1919.

† Since the above was written the Marquis de Lema has again been Minister of Foreign Affairs.

there is going to be just as much counting of heads and bargaining, and just as many secret agreements amongst the delegates, as there is in any political caucus.

De Lema mentioned that he had met Winston Churchill, when the latter, then First Lord of the Admiralty, was here not long before the war; and that although he repeated with reserve a judgment founded on a single meeting, he was not impressed by him. That did not surprise me; for, barring the fact that he always gives evidence of having a vigorous mentality, no one does himself less justice than Churchill in such casual encounters.

I was interested by de Lema telling me that he knew of my interview with Dato at San Sebastian last summer; and my statement that Spain's only chance of being at the Peace Conference was to break with Germany.

I interrupted to say that I would like him to remember that none of this had been on my own initiative. I had never sought that interview, much less had I ventured to suggest that Spain should take any step.

I knew that, for internal reasons, the Spanish Government itself had carefully to consider the risk. That, on the contrary, I had been asked by the Spanish Ambassador in London, with whom I was on friendly terms, to try to find out in a certain quarter what chance there was of Spain being admitted to the Conference; that I had then spoken of the matter to Mr. Lloyd George, telling him that I had been asked by Señor Merry del Val to meet him in Spain to see Dato; and that I had been put in a position by the Prime Minister (as well as by Pichon) to state definitely

that no neutral would be admitted to the Conference upon any ground whatever. I added that I now rather regretted that Spain had not taken a bolder course; that, without having any exact knowledge on the subject, I was inclined to think that if the Government had had the courage to act it would have surmounted the difficulties and weathered the storm; and that possibly the Tangier matter would now have been further advanced.*

De Lema said that he fully understood that I had only acted unofficially, after having been requested to do so by the Spanish Ambassador. His own opinion also was that the Government would have carried the day had it broken relations with Germany; although a reconstruction of the Cabinet would have been necessary. He thought that Dato himself would have elected to have taken the risk if it had only been a question of facing a storm or some agitation in the country; but that his liberty of action was restricted by the fact that Maura's was a Coalition Government.

I then went to see Señor Alcala Zamora†—a man of a different class, and of a very different type to any I have yet met. He is a lawyer of considerable reputation at the Bar, who has made his own way from the most modest beginnings. Throughout the war he was in favour of the Central Powers. Quite sincerely so, as thereby he lost a good part of his practice; for he formerly acted for the Crédit Lyonnais and other large French concerns.

* Since 1919 I have somewhat changed my view on this point. Possibly too much value was attached (and not only by Spain) to the benefits which might accrue from being represented at the Peace Conference.

† Now Minister of War.

He impressed me as being very open and decidedly in earnest in his opinions, but as not having a very broad view of matters in general. He drew a sharp dividing line between two periods: the war, the incidents of which, he said, should be forgotten as speedily as possible; and the future. To a large extent I agree with this principle. But it is easier for some people to enunciate it than for others to follow it; and I am always struck by the fact that it is largely those who were on the losing side who are most active in advancing it. Alcala Zamora said that there was no reason why England and Spain should not be friendly in the future. But he seemed to consider it of less importance than did anyone else to whom I have talked here. He also spoke about Tangier (that is common ground for Spaniards of all shades of political opinion), but told me nothing I had not heard before. His French was so limited that it was only with some difficulty that we understood each other.

I am rather sorry to leave Madrid without having heard a debate in the Cortes. No other Parliament in Europe contains so many speakers of real eloquence; and that is perhaps partly accountable for its legislative futility.

I have been struck by the insistence upon the desire for a closer connection with England, and the complaint that we display a self-satisfied ignorance of this country and its institutions. There is a great deal of truth in the latter statement. Few people in England are aware that Spain has had a constitutional form of government for more than a century, since 1812, with the exception of the brief period

(1823 to 1833) when Ferdinand VII. regained the throne. A British statesman once contemptuously remarked to me that while Spain pretended to have parliamentary government, it was really a country which was generally under martial law. The truth is that, in her desire to keep pace with the times, Spain, considering the illiterate percentage of her population, was far too eager to follow in the wake of nations which had had a much longer preparation for the task of self-government. So far from being reactionary, she suffers from having adopted the parliamentary system too soon, while the situation was until recently complicated by the absence of any form of closure, which enabled a determined minority to carry obstruction to undue length. It has, therefore, sometimes been necessary to suspend the constitutional guarantees, which, however, is a very different matter to imposing martial law. But that step is only taken to preserve order and to protect property; and is in all respects less rigorous than the Defence of the Realm Act under which we lived in England a few months ago. Moreover, any interruption of the guarantees must be confirmed by Parliament, while the liberty of that body has been so unbridled (and while such was greatly abused) that it is only recently—in 1917, I think—that there was any form of closure by which deliberate obstruction could be kept in check.

The social legislation—Compulsory Education, Employers' Liability, Old Age Pensions, a Maximum Working Day, and other similar measures—is quite in keeping with the national life of the country, and, indeed, there is never any serious complaint on that

score. If there was it could easily be expressed, for suffrage is direct and universal for the Lower Chamber, although indirect for that part of the Senate which is elective.

Political parties are somewhat mixed in Spain, although there is nothing like the same division in the groups as prevails in France. Since 1912 the Liberal-Conservatives, who comprise the largest and best organised party, has been divided into two factions, one of which follows Maura and the other Dato; although upon recent occasions these statesmen have acted together in a Coalition Cabinet. The Liberal Party was likewise composed of two groups, the leader of one being the Marquis d'Alhucemas (Garcia Prieto), and of the other Count Romanones. But this division no longer exists.*

Going towards the Left, the next party are the Reformists, who stand mid-way between the Monarchists (that is, the Liberal-Conservatives and the Liberals, between whose policies there is no essential difference of national importance) and the Republicans. They appear to draw their strength—such as it is—from those who want to be Republicans, but have not the force of character to follow Republican views to their logical conclusion.

The outstanding figure in the Republican party today is Señor Lerroux, an out-and-out revolutionary, who has not hesitated to declare that he would ally himself with Socialists, Anarchists, or anyone else in order to upset the existing order of things.

The Socialist party has few representatives in the Legislature, while there is no Labour party properly

* See page 179.

so-called. In fact, all social reforms have been effected by the Liberal-Conservatives or by the Liberals, the Republicans and Socialists devoting their energies to enterprises which are more or less revolutionary, while showing entire indifference to the material welfare of the people. Their contention is, in brief, that everything must be overturned before there can be any change for the better.

Despite the idea prevalent in England, the Monarchy is not a vital issue in Spanish politics. There is no serious Republican party, and there would only be a Republic *faute d'un roi*. The King of Spain is more secure on his throne than is any other sovereign in continental Europe; and while kingship to-day is at best a thankless task, Alfonso XIII. has at least the satisfaction of knowing that that security is largely due to his own steadfast courage.

CHAPTER VII

ANGLO-FRENCH RELATIONS, 1920

September 23rd, 1920.

At Versailles for the election of a successor to Deschanel. Lunched at the Hôtel Réservoirs, crowded as it always is on these occasions, but (despite what the newspapers say) chiefly by senators, deputies, and journalists. An entirely different scene from that day in January, 1913, when there was such a bitter contest; Clémenceau and Camille Pelletan doing their utmost to defeat Poincaré by electing Pams. Then there was some excitement, and *tout* Paris was really at Versailles—a couple of political duchesses and Cécile Sorel being notably *en évidence*. However, to-day's affair was sufficiently interesting to attract a certain number of Parisian celebrities. R. went with me, although I had only been able to get one ticket, thinking that after luncheon she would smile her way in my wake into the Château; and, rather to my astonishment, she accomplished it. I alleged that she did it by American cheek; but (being half French) she protested that it was her French charm which did the trick.

The election itself rather lacked excitement because the result was a foregone conclusion. Some mild cheers and some cries of derision when various Parlia-

mentarians voted—but the only spontaneous outburst was when Castelnau went into the Tribune to deposit his ballot.

Millerand looked very bored when all gathered around to congratulate him.

In the result, France has now got a President who openly says that he proposes to exercise the powers which the Constitution gives him—an announcement which has aroused some opposition and has created more alarm. This is intensified by the fact that Millerand is above all things *entêté*. He is the antithesis of Lloyd George: has all that fixity of purpose and continuity in action which Lloyd George lacks; but, lawyer-like, he speaks by his brief, and therefore, until Millerand's run of luck began with the affair of Poland, Lloyd George always played about him at their various conferences—for Millerand cannot *manœuvrer sur place*.

Undoubtedly the French Constitution gives the President of the French Republic pretty wide powers, despite Sir H. Maine's *boutade* to the contrary. But the trouble is that since MacMahon used those powers and had to resign—the famous incident of Seize Mai—no President has dared to be much more than a figurehead. But the powers are there, and no revision of the Constitution, as is advocated by Briand and others, is really necessary. I put forward that view when the matter came up in conversation with Henry Simond and others during the war; and I was interested to read recently an article by Poincaré in that sense, and intimating that had it not been war-time he himself would have exercised the powers he thus possessed.

Great speculation as to who will be Président du Conseil; the names most mentioned are those of Briand (who urged Millerand to go to the Elysée) Poincaré and Georges Leygues.

Deschanel's collapse is a real tragedy. For years he has kept aside from any participation in a Cabinet so as not to injure his prospects of some day being President—his one lifelong ambition; while the great argument of Deschanel's friends against Clémenceau was that he was so old that he would be unable to finish his term of office, and that another election would thus be necessary within the seven years. And now eight months have passed, and it is Deschanel who cannot go on any longer. How Clémenceau must grimly smile! When asked if he was again going to be a candidate, he answered, "I was too old last January; I am too young now. I am going to India to shoot tigers. Anyway, that is a less dangerous game than politics." And, indeed, he left for India last night.

Possibly Deschanel threw himself out of the train when he was said to have fallen out a couple of months ago. Loucheur told me all about that soon afterwards. The crisis was reached last week when he cast himself into the pond at Rambouillet. It was seen that something had to be done without further delay.

There was a certain manifestation of sympathy when M. René Brice, Deschanel's father-in-law, went into the Tribune to vote.

September 24th.

Called this morning to see M. Paul Doumer and to thank him for getting me a ticket for the Congress at

Versailles. As usual, had an interesting conversation. Doumer told me that he and many others who once wanted a revision of the Constitution had completely changed their views on account of the mess Wilson had made of the Treaty ; that they were now convinced that it was just as bad for a President of a Republic to have too much power as to have too little. He thought Millerand might make, or rather get into, trouble by trying to have too much influence on the course of affairs ; in describing his character he also used the word "*entêté*."

He predicted that if Briand was Président du Conseil and Millerand interfered with B.'s wishes, there would be a rupture in which B. would make it appear that M. was the one in the wrong, that he was far too clever, and too much for Millerand. Doumer said that Poincaré had told him yesterday that if Millerand offered him the premiership he would accept ; but Doumer thought that Leygues was the more likely man.

Doumer said that it was strange that the Right seemed to fear Millerand as much as the more moderate Radicals ; and he cited the fact that yesterday Léon Daudet told him that he did not think M. would do. I asked D. if he thought Painlevé's political career was finished—mentioned how I had told the latter that his absence for some months might well hurt him politically—and how Painlevé had replied that anyway nothing could happen before October—rather an unfortunate prediction as it turned out. Doumer said that he thought Painlevé would probably be in a Government some day again—probably as Ministre d'Instruction Publique. He added that as

Président du Conseil Painlevé did very well, though he was rather weak ; and that all the real power about the war was, during those three months, in the hands of a committee of three—Léon Bourgeois, Doumer, and another man whom I forget.

Speaking of Joffre, he said that not only had the latter not conceived the plan of the Battle of the Marne, but that he even wanted to retreat further. The answers Doumer gave me to various questions I put to him on this subject confirmed the view I have formed from all I have been able to find out by asking those who were likely to know. Joffre did not—and could not have—conceived the plan. On the other hand, his own attitude in the retreat, and during the battle once it was engaged; all made for success ; he inspired confidence in his armies. Joffre's worst defect was his jealousy ; and it was never shown in a more unpleasant form than by the terms of the citation he gave to Galliéni (who was really responsible for the Ourcq victory) and which G. refused to accept. While Galliéni was Military Governor of Paris; Doumer exercised the civil functions (September, 1914). He had not gone to Bordeaux with so many other politicians.

D. told me of Foch's famous interview with French during the Ypres Battle. The latter felt obliged to retreat further, as one part of his army was too hard pressed and was quite worn out. Foch implored him not to do so, and, as a final argument, said, " Marshal, if you do that, our line must retreat also. Calais will be unprotected. On you will rest the responsibility of leaving your country exposed to a German invasion. Will you assume that respon-

sibility?" French kept silent an instant, and then burst out, "I can't do that. I will put myself at the head of my troops and be killed fighting with them." Foch replied, "That would be cowardly (*lâche*), Marshal: your duty is to stay here. I will give you a certain small number of troops to support your men. Hold firm and we may yet win."

French did hold firm, and the next day it was the Germans who withdrew.

René Brice yesterday gave Doumer details about Deschanel, his son-in-law. It appears that he is quite lucid between these attacks, but that he has lost all confidence in himself.

Thus before July 14th. It was represented to Deschanel that he then seemed quite well, and that he ought to be present at the usual Longchamps review. He said that he was frightened to do so; that if any general, ambassador, or other personage came to speak to him, he might possibly have one of the crises to which he was subject. Very painful.

September 25th.

Doumer was right. Millerand did send for Leygues, who accepted and kept Millerand's Cabinet. This was certainly a tactical error, for it gives force to those who say that Millerand means as President to keep in his own hands the power which the *Président du Conseil* has long exercised. A new Cabinet would have shown some independence on the part of Leygues: to retain the old one makes it appear that he is simply going to be the mouthpiece of Millerand.

Georges Leygues has already been a Minister five or six times, but he has no political force or power.

He is chiefly known through having inherited most of the millions of old Chauchard, the owner of the Magasins du Louvre, to whom he was in no way related. But in Chauchard's lifetime Leygues, it is said, made it his business to see that he got various decorations ; and after his death he got Chauchard's money. The whole transaction is not regarded as a good point in Leygues' career, and it is not without irony that Gustave Téry remarks in *L'Œuvre* this morning that if Leygues can look after the affairs of the Republic as well as he did after his own, the country is lucky.

Am going to Brussels this afternoon.

September 26th.

Returned from Brussels this afternoon. No sign left of the German occupation. The only change I could see was that the streets seemed more crowded and more noisy than ever.

September 29th.

Monsieur X came to see me last night. A Greek, who has a considerable fortune and some political influence, and who lives a good part of the year in Paris—once very friendly with King Constantine, with whom, however, he broke during the war. I met him last year, and found him very well informed about the affairs of his country. His brother was once Minister of Finance.

He told me that the recent attempt to assassinate Venizelos could be traced to the entourage of Constantine, to the extent that some of them, and notably Prince — (but not the ex-King) knew that the

attempt was to be made, though probably they had not directly instigated it. He said that Constantine had in all an income of about £8,000 to £10,000; that the Queen might still have a small income from what she inherited as a Hohenzollern, but that, anyway, she had a large fortune in jewels—the jewels left by the Duchesse Galiéra. I asked about the young King. X said that he was *bête*—but quite alive to his own interests; and that he had broken off all relations with his relatives now in Switzerland, because some of them, and especially the Queen, had tried to *taper* him.

I asked how Venizelos had finally consented to allow the boy to marry his mistress, which he had formerly (rather stupidly) opposed. X described it as *chantage* on the part of the young King. He sent for Venizelos one day, and told him that unless he was given permission to do so, he would leave and they could find another King. That would not have done at all, so he had his way. The girl comes of one of the best families in Greece, is insignificant, and has no desire to play any rôle; but she has a younger and cleverer sister, who is *intrigante aux bouts des ongles*, and who is trying to make what influence she can out of her sister's position.

Nobody knows whether or not Venizelos wants a Republic eventually. I imagine that the truth is not so much that he does or does not want one, but that he sees it must come in time, only he hopes that it will not be in his time; he has no wish to be President—he has more powers to-day as a virtual dictator. He is said to have remarked that the present situation of the monarchy is ideal, for as any children whom

the King may have will not be in the line of succession, the monarchy will simply die out.

I knew that V. was not so old as he looked, but I was surprised to hear that he was only fifty-six.

C. told me all about the compulsory sale and cutting up of estates in Greece and Roumania; the owners fairly well compensated in the former, but very badly in the latter. He said that he considered Greece and Bulgaria the two most prosperous countries in Europe to-day. I did not agree.

October 1st.

Lunched to-day at the Cercle Inter-Allié with X and a number of others. Amongst the latter was Y, who had worked with de Blowitz in his latter years. I had never before met anyone who had been associated with de Blowitz, so I asked Y various questions about him. He said that he had, without exception, the greatest political intelligence of any man he had ever met, and that he had known most of the statesmen of the last quarter of a century. I should imagine that that was putting him (de Blowitz) altogether too high. Certainly it would be if one judged (as I do not entirely) by his life as written by himself—trash and nonsense.

X said that all the statesmen who came to Paris always went to see de B., and he mentioned especially a conversation between Hohenlohe and de B. at which he was present. He said that de B. was entirely lost without the services of a certain old man who translated his articles and despatches for him into English; that de B. could write English passably (I had always thought that

he could not write it at all), though not well enough for publication; but that his articles could easily have been translated or fixed up in Printing House Square. But de B. would not have that.

In those days none of the Paris staff went to the office before the evening, and there were none of the telephone calls from London which are such a feature of the Northcliffe régime. I asked how de B. would have got on with Northcliffe. He said that it would never have done at all—that at the end de B. was already chafing about the quite mild control which the foreign editor, Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, wanted to exercise.

We spoke of Repington's book, and X said that he noticed some references to me. He added that he supposed R. did not like me, because I had somewhat discounted him by what I had said in the French Press during the war. I answered that I had no recollection of ever having spoken of Repington in the French Press; that, as a matter of fact, we were on good, but by no means close, terms. He then reminded me that in an interview (I think in *Le Temps* or *L'Echo de Paris*) I had said that Repington's personal feud with Henry Wilson was well known to lead him to attack whatever the latter did, and thus his comments had to be read as biased opinions. It is quite true. I did say it; but I had entirely forgotten it. X said that he had read R.'s book in proof, as its publishers, Constable's, were also his publishers, and they had sent it to him so that he might find a French publisher. He had arranged with Payout to take it, and it is to come out here in two or three months. He thought the book most

interesting and amusing, but that it consisted of a series of breaches of confidences—and also gave an entirely false idea of R.'s own importance. He said that R. and Northcliffe were the two vainest Englishmen he had ever met.

I forgot to mention one good story which X told me. Jusserand was given an honorary degree at Harvard shortly after he had received one at Yale. At luncheon he noticed the motto, "*Veritas*," in different places, and he asked Barret Wendell how it was that the Yale motto was "*Veritas et Lux*" (pronouncing the latter word in the French way, as if it was spelt "luxe"), while at Harvard it was only "*Veritas*." "I can only suggest," replied B. W., "that it is because at Yale *Veritas* is an *article de luxe*."

October 9th.

Spent a couple of hours this afternoon with L.M., a man who for many years has been active in politics, though he has always failed to be elected a Deputy. He told me that he had just returned from the devastated regions, and that on account of lack of money practically nothing was being done to restore things. Upon that, and upon the financial condition of the country as shewn by the fact that the gold held by the Banque de France and by the contents of its *portefeuille* (meaning, for this purpose, chiefly paper with three signatures) did not begin to equal the paper money in circulation (43 milliards, I believe), he based an argument showing that France was in desperate need of payments by Germany in reparation. So far as I was concerned, he was preaching to the con-

verted—not that I ever thought anything else. He complained that France had been put in a position of undue inferiority *vis-à-vis* England. I told him that by the inevitable force of things the country with more money was bound to be in a stronger position, while Lloyd George's personal position in dealing with French politicians was strengthened by the fact that he was more or less permanent while they came and went.

My own personal view is that France would do well to deal with Germany direct, if L. G. will not go further than he has yet done. Of course, the latter is for the time being in a bad temper. His vanity is hurt because, after dictating to France and others for some months, he finds that (partly by the consistency of his policy and partly by good luck about Poland) the less clever Millerand seems to have brought over both Italy and Belgium to his views. Anyway, L. G. no longer rules the roost.

L. M. thinks it possible that Leygues' Cabinet may be succeeded by a great Briand Ministry, a *grande ministère* on the order of Gambetta's ill-fated *Grande Ministère*—Briand as Prime Minister with Poincaré as Minister of Finance (which I doubt), Barthou and Painlevé; and that such an aggregation might be able to deal with Germany. However, Cabinets of All the Talents seldom have much luck.

L. M. has no high opinion of Tardieu, and recounted to me an electoral trick of the latter's which, if true, is rather unpleasant.

I remarked that, while I agreed with the tenor of Tardieu's articles about the non-execution of the Treaty, yet that both he and Loucheur, in defending

what was largely their own work, seemed to forget that they were also responsible for the omission of any "sanction" or penalty in the event of its non-execution—the only thing that Germany can or will understand.

October 21st, 1920.

It seems that Venizelos runs a fair chance of having his crisis about the form of government before he expected it, for it is touch-and-go whether or not the young King will live. The bite of an enraged monkey—what a stupid death! However, it is now certain that there is no intention (or, anyway, none on V.'s part) of proclaiming a Republic. In the event of the King's death the throne will probably be offered to his younger brother, Paul; but this will be with the idea, so far as France is concerned, and possibly the arrangement, that it should be refused, and that the offer should only be made as a sop to our own Royal Family. Quite unnecessary, I should say. They really want to get the second son of the King of the Belgians to take it, but it is hard to get an answer as the King is still in Brazil. However, as he already refused the throne of Hungary for this boy (or intimated that he would not consider an offer of it if made), it is rather doubtful whether he will accept the equally shaky one of Greece. The *métier de roi* is neither interesting nor profitable these days; while no crown has, within the last hundred years, been so much hawked round as that of Greece. Apart from those who have actually worn it, it has been offered at various times to the uncle of the present Lord Derby (an offer which greatly seized Disraeli's

imagination), to the late Duke of Edinburgh, and to a number of princes out of a job.

The Leygues Ministry is said to be tottering—to such an extent that it may fall even before Parliament meets. It is André Lefevre, the Minister of War, who has caused all the trouble—about the new Military Service Bill which is to be introduced next session. If the Leygues Cabinet goes, the prediction is that it will be succeeded by a Poincaré-Briand or Briand-Poincaré combination.

November 3rd.

Returned to-day from Marseilles. Lunched with X to meet Painlevé—just returned from China. When I arrived I found in the *salon* a short, square-cut, vigorous-looking man in mufti, whom I did not recognise. It turned out to be General Franchet d'Esperey. At luncheon we spoke of the story current in the French army during the war, that at critical times Joffre always slept, and Franchet d'Esperey always soothed himself by reading Dumas. Much conversation about the political situation.

November 5th.

Dined with Y. Only Madame Y and Joseph Reinach. J. R., when he was eighteen years of age, became secretary to Gambetta, for whom he has always retained the greatest veneration. He is himself a remarkable man; has read and written enormously; is equally at home in the discussion of the political affairs of any country; is on friendly terms with politicians of all countries (including Lloyd George), and has been behind the scenes in all

the political affairs of his own for the last half-century. In appearance he is not unlike Edward VII., with whom he used to go to Marienbad. He amused us by the story of how Clémenceau annexed one of his present companions on his visit to India. He met this man by chance at a luncheon in the Var, and liked him. "You must come to India with me," said Clémenceau. The man protested that he could not leave his family and business. Clémenceau insisted, "Nonsense, they will be there when you return. You must come with me." And go the man did.

Reinach was amused by the remark about Lloyd George which someone made in the lobby of the House of Commons: "None of us believe L. G., even when he happens to be telling the truth, while all of us believe Bonar Law, even when he is not entirely veracious."

We discussed the execution of the Treaty. Reinach had a plan whereby each of the principal German cities should be made to reconstruct a French town in the devastated area, thus getting away from the question of a valuation of damage, and thus enabling the necessary money to be raised, as both Allies and neutrals could invest in loans raised for this purpose by German towns. Possibly it was a practicable plan, but I imagine that it is too late now. Discussed Millerand's attitude about Russia, and my interview with him after I had seen Krassin.

Y told me that after the Presidential election, Briand came to see him, as he expected to be asked to form a Ministry. Poincaré had the same expectation, as I noted at the time. Y says that Briand is eaten up with the desire again to be Président du

Conseil. For his own part, he thinks that there will soon be a Briand-Poincaré Cabinet.

Y showed me the letter which he wrote to Foch in December, 1919, upon the instructions of Clémenceau. At that time Foch was saying that the Germans might mobilise in April, 1920, and he was taking steps accordingly. The letter proved that the Armistice of 1918 was entirely the work of Foch himself.

That reminded me that Franchet d'Esperey had told me on Wednesday that the great defect of the French military school, both before the war and again now, was that it based everything on the lessons of Napoleon's campaigns; that while those campaigns were valuable as teaching certain principles of warfare, they were now little more valuable than the campaigns of Cæsar, so greatly had conditions changed within the last hundred years.

We spoke of the various French generals.

Y said that Galliéni was *l'intelligence même*, and that his idea of the Battle of the Marne, which was perfect in its simplicity, had saved civilisation. Yet, that although he considered Joffre as a stupid (*une brute stupide*), in this instance he thought he had been right. Joffre did not want to fight when and where he did, but some days later and further back. As it was, the English army was exhausted, and the full results of the victory could not be reaped. However, he put Joffre below Pétain and Foch. Of Foch he said that he had that enormous confidence which was such an asset for a general in chief command. On the other hand, all that was known of Foch was that he had won the war when he had plenty of troops,

English and American, as well as French, when the Germans were known to be in disarray, and when he had the advantage of four years' warfare. As a man, he did not regard Foch as extremely intelligent. He cited Foch's fear of a German mobilisation in the spring of 1920 as an example. In brief, Foch thought that France was made for the army, and not the army for France. Although there is probably an element of truth in all this, yet I think that Y is too pro-Clémenceau not to be prejudiced against Foch on the way the latter turned against Clémenceau and his Government.

Pétain, he said, had been successful throughout. Perhaps his greatest military feat was the way in which he changed the whole situation at Verdun within forty-eight hours, when everything was in confusion and a retreat was imminent. He had been equally successful in restoring the morale of the army after the Nivelle fiasco. In spite of the disaffection at that period, extending to whole regiments and battalions, only thirty-one men were shot.

Reinach spoke of Joffre as a truly Republican general, and said that all the others brought something else to their task. It appears that the Joffre question is one which Y and R. have long disputed.

November 6th.

Lunched Joseph Reinach. A magnificent *hôtel particulier* in the Parc Monceau.

Possibly the most gorgeous house I have been in in Paris, though not so sincerely imposing as some in the Rue de Varenne quartier. Many pictures, none of

which interested me very much, except a lifelike portrait of Gambetta in the dining-room. What did interest me were the books, and I much regretted that I could not browse amongst them at my ease. Fifteen thousand in all, and many splendid bindings. J. R. told me that his brother had just double that number, but that it was a purely working library, with no attention to bindings or display. *Tant mieux.*

Nearly twenty people at luncheon. J. R. and his daughter, Léon and Madame Abrami, Comte Bonin Longuare, the Italian Ambassador in Paris, the recently-appointed French Ambassador to Vienna, whom I do not know, and whose name I did not catch ; Prince and Princess Troubetskoi, the Comtesse de Fitz-James, Hersaint, the great engineer and contractor, whom I knew before, a keen, original and often disconcerting thinker, and about half a dozen others. A much larger luncheon than one would ordinarily find in any London house, and much too large for general conversation. But then, in any event, conversation in French society is never so free or *déchainé* as in London. The truth is that society in Paris is less well-defined, and consequently is larger and less intimate. That comes from the large foreign or cosmopolitan element which overlaps here and there, and also from the fact that society and politics are not so closely united as, until recent time, they have been in England. In England, political life is an avenue to society. In France, it is rather an exit.

I had the good fortune to be next to Madame de Fitz-James, who had on her other side the Italian Ambassador, and we chattered politics throughout. The

Prince and Princess Troubetskoi present another side of the Russian picture. From wealth—not only great, but very great wealth—they are now reduced to what is not far from actual poverty. They even look poor. He is a pathetic picture ; while the signs of suffering are so evident on her face that they quite obscure any indication of the beauty which it is said was once hers.

By the way, at luncheon someone referred to the fact that as part of the celebrations of the jubilee of the Republic next week, Gambetta's heart is to be removed from Villa d'Avray to the Panthéon. J. R. expressed the opinion (and no one now living is so well qualified to speak about Gambetta) that it was a great mistake ; Gambetta's heart ought to be left at Villa d'Avray. "Why, then, is it to be removed?" asked someone. "*Mon cher*," replied J. R., "there is a family, and no family can resist the Panthéon."

November 8th.

Painlevé lunched with me to-day at my hotel. He was to have come at 12.30 and only arrived at 1 P.M. But he made up for it by sitting at table until 4.30 P.M., when the people coming for tea forced us out. He had told me at the outset that he wanted to talk to me alone ; and as I had asked no one else, it was as he had wished. He recounted in great detail the story of his falling out with Clémenceau—against whom he is moderately bitter. He says that he was *très lié* with Clémenceau, and that the latter even supported him when he was Minister of War ; but that the trouble was caused by some fuss about Madame X.

Anyway, he told it to me all in detail. But I cannot remember it.

We talked of Tardieu's article in *L'Illustration*, about the Armistice and the Treaty—and Foch's remarkable answer by way of an interview in *Le Matin*. Painlevé is unfavourable to Foch, though not very sympathetic to Tardieu.

He thinks that both Malvy and Caillaux were unjustly treated. He says that Malvy was a man *du quatrième ordre*, but that he always found him at his post, and that therefore he neither knew nor cared anything about his private life, though he had differed with him about the conduct of public affairs.

Painlevé said that after Gambetta he put Jules Ferry and Waldeck Rousseau first amongst the statesmen of the Republic. I never thought that I could get on with anyone who was pro-Ferry, and yet I find that Painlevé is more *sympathique* than any politician in France.

Painlevé said that Dreyfus (about whose recent life I was curious) had worked well in the war, and had been decorated; I forget whether it was the Croix de Guerre or the Légion d'Honneur. I also asked him about Commandant Marchand, of Fashoda fame. He said that M. was now a general, that he knew him well and saw him fairly often; but that M. had some curious theories, and that about those he was quite mad.

I am sorry I cannot remember Painlevé's account of the reason of the falling out between Clémenceau and himself; but I recollect that the crucial moment was when a certain lady asked a man whose attentions she coveted to feel if her *cuisse*s were not firm;

the ungallant one declined, hence bitter hatred—the intervention of Clémenceau—and the change in the course of history.

Remarkably reminiscent of Helen of Troy.

November 11th.

A holiday—for the second anniversary of the Armistice—while they are at the same time celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Republic. The unknown soldier to be buried beneath the Arc de Triomphe—Gambetta's heart to be transferred to the Panthéon.

I asked Painlevé the other day whether all his life he had believed that, if there was a war, the Republic would rise to defend France. He said that he had always been absolutely assured and certain. For my own part, I had thought otherwise, until Agadir, when all changed in the spirit of the people. But what a strange country! We in England fight when we have to, always as automatically as we can, and while we fight, we eat. It's all in the day's work. A duty—and, therefore, something which must be performed—coupled with the instinct of self-preservation. In France it is none of that; they fight because it is France—for France. Difficult to express; but there lies there a curious difference between the two countries.

Afterwards, the French invariably fight amongst themselves; so to-day the world is edified by a public dispute between André Tardieu and Foch, the former placing the blame for the present state of affairs on Foch because he made the terms of the Armistice, while Foch replies that it is Tardieu and the other Treaty-makers who are responsible.

November 12th.

Spent the morning with Painlevé—*chez lui*, Rue de Segulier.

He told me once again about the Nivelle affair, how Nivelle was completely dominated by a fanatic, who knew that he could not live six months, and wanted the war over before his death. It was d'Alenson who, after the Calais meeting when Nivelle was given a certain limited supreme power, drafted and got Nivelle to sign the order to Haig, which the latter disregarded and protested against, and which led to the meeting in London, where Haig signed a letter accepting the situation, but with the reserves of *un homme enragé*. All that I knew before, but it is a subject which Painlevé cannot keep off. But what I did not know—but always suspected—was that it was Lloyd George who arranged that at the Calais meeting it should be the French who insisted that Nivelle should have supreme command for the coming operations, saying that he wished it, but that he himself dared not propose it on account of Haig's popularity in England. Painlevé assured me that it is a fact—I say that I did not know it, but I think that my diary of that date (which I have not here) will show that at the time I was told it by the French authorities, though I could hardly believe it.

November 16th.

Lunched at the Cercle Inter-Allié. Before luncheon had a curious conversation with Arthur Mayer, who explained to me that while he was an "impenitent" Royalist, he did not believe in the Divine Right, but thought that "everything should be for the people

and nothing by the people." He said that he yet had faith that a Cæsar would arise in the French democracy, and deplored the way we had destroyed our own constitution by abridging the powers of the House of Lords.

All this was à propos of the unexpected defeat of Venizelos, which has created an enormous sensation. My own view is that V.'s vagueness about the régime was perhaps the chief cause of his downfall. Greece is determined at all costs to have a king—that is the wish of many even who are opposed to Constantine. But though V. made Constantine the issue of the election, he did not make it clear that in the event of Constantine's son refusing to accept the conditions imposed by his government, he would still provide a monarch.

I am amused by the League of Nations having referred to a Commission the question of whether they should deposit a wreath at the foot of J. J. Rousseau's monument in Geneva ; I would have given something to have seen Robert Cecil's *tête* on that occasion.

X tells me that Repington is delighted by the success of his book. He has received many indignant letters (especially a very unpleasant one from Macready), but that only makes him chuckle—and makes his book sell. He told X that it has achieved exactly what he foresaw : that everyone reads the gossip which runs throughout it, and thus also reads the more serious part for which he wanted to get a public.

November 18th.

I dined last night with Painlevé at Foyot's. He had a *salon* so that we might be alone, and we stayed

there talking until nearly midnight. I never imagined that I could be really friendly with anyone holding the political creed which Painlevé does—the creed which I most detest, for, above all, he is anti-clerical. On the other hand, he is honest and even naïve to an extent rarely found amongst the politicians of this or any other country, which, as a matter of fact, is a *faiblesse* from a political standpoint. For other reasons I doubt if he could ever rise above a certain political level. I was amused when I asked him whether Sarraill was not an energetic general, and he replied, "*Mais oui; mais surtout il est un bon républicain.*" This just about gives Painlevé's measure.

He is a Parisian by birth, and he told me that in these days he often had a nightmare that shells were falling near the house in which he was sleeping, and that in his dream he wondered whether they were shelling in 1870 or in the late war, for as a youngster he went through the siege of Paris.

We talked first about Paul Doumer, who, at the coming Senatorial elections, will probably not present himself in Corsica. He has fallen out with the other politicians there, because he would not submit to the joint political expenses being paid by a war profiteer who is at present being prosecuted before the Cour Correctionnelle.

I asked Painlevé how he first came into political life. He told me that after being Professor in Lille, he came to the Polytechnic in Paris. Some time later he was sent for by General Gonse, who was, I think, then Minister of War, but, anyway, was at the War Office. He said he had heard that Painlevé had had a conversation with a certain cousin of Dreyfus, who

had told him that all the family were convinced that Dreyfus was guilty. Painlevé replied that he had not had any conversation with the person indicated, and that in a conversation which he had had with a cousin of a cousin exactly the opposite view had been expressed. Gonse then said that in that event Painlevé's deposition (which for that and certain other reasons was in favour of Dreyfus) would be of no use. Some months later, to his stupefaction, to use his own words, Painlevé found out that there was a paper in the *dossier* saying that he had made exactly the statement which Gonse had expected him to make. The result was that he was a witness at the Rennes trial and had a dramatic confrontation with Gonse, whom he absolutely demolished.

Painlevé told me once again all the story about Nivelles. I said that from all I had read I had formed a low opinion of Nivelles as a man, because when things began to go wrong he seemed to be at his wits' end to find a "*bouc émissaire*." Painlevé said that was exactly what he had done. He had first gone to General Micheler, meaning to try to get him to resign. Micheler, who does not like cunning, suspected the object of the visit. He was living in a small villa surrounded by a garden. He threw the windows of his room wide open, arranged that his staff officers should be in the garden, and then told Nivelles what he thought of him in the strongest possible manner and in the loudest possible tones. Nivelles left the house staggering like a drunken man.

Nivelles also did his best to get rid of Mangin. He asked that he should be sent to one of the African colonies, but the then Minister of Colonies said that

he had no intention of sending such a firebrand to a place which he had just succeeded in pacifying. Painlevé pointed out to Nivelle that in any event Mangin would undoubtedly refuse, in the circumstances, to accept such an appointment. Nivelle then said that Mangin must be got rid of as, rightly or wrongly, he had entirely lost the confidence of his subordinates. Painlevé replied that if Nivelle confirmed that, he, as Minister of War, would have him relieved of his command, and it was arranged that that should be done at the Conseil which was to be held the next day—a Sunday—and that in the meantime Nivelle, upon returning to his headquarters, should notify Mangin.

Painlevé carried out his part at the Conseil the next morning. But when Nivelle began to notify Mangin, the latter, who is vigorous to the point of brutality, turned on him in such a way that Nivelle said he would not go on with the matter. However, it was already done, and when Nivelle's promised letter to Painlevé did not come, he was reminded of it, and he then wrote a letter requesting that Mangin should be relieved of his command, but not upon the grounds which he had at first alleged and upon which the Government had acted.

We talked of Caillaux. Painlevé said that he had never liked him personally on account of his overbearing and impertinent manner. The only serious conversation he had with him during the war was in December, 1914, when Caillaux said that he could not understand what the Government was thinking about; that then, when the country had just been relieved from the great peril with which it was

threatened, was exactly the time to launch a National Loan, which might provide the money for carrying on the war for some years.

As Painlevé said, not only was the idea wise, but it was certainly not that of a *défaitiste*. He agreed, however, that by the force of things, all *défaitistes* tried to make a centre and rally round Caillaux. In his opinion, Caillaux' downfall came from the fact that when such great events were taking place, he could not control himself and stand aside, and that if he had gone quickly to Mamers, had interested himself in charitable war works and had done nothing else for a year, he would undoubtedly at least have been a member of the Government.

He said that the very existence of the papers in the safe at Florence had been indicated to the prosecution by Caillaux himself, and that there was nothing in them other than that they showed that Caillaux had been foolish enough to put in writing his own views—hardly a criminal offence unless he followed them by action. Also that all researches had shown that his fortune was just about what he and his wife had inherited, viz., about a million francs of his own and something less belonging to his wife.

As he pressed me on the point, I said that while I had always been prejudiced against Caillaux since the Moroccan affair some years before the war, yet I realised that probably he was not guilty of the offence charged, but that, even if he was not, I thought that in time of war, Clémenceau was right in shutting up so actively dangerous a personage. Painlevé replied, "*Oui, il fallait le coffrer,*" but said that he would have done it in a different way; that, in fact, had

he remained as Prime Minister, he had intended to send him to Madeira. I suggested that there might have been some difficulty in that: Caillaux might have refused to go, and Madeira was not a French possession. However, Painlevé asserted that Caillaux would have listened to reason. I doubt it: he never did yet, and Painlevé is hardly a strong enough character to make him do so.

Painlevé said that, according to what he had heard, Caillaux was dragging out a rather miserable existence at Mœmers, and that his health was greatly affected by the two years' imprisonment.*

One thing Painlevé told me which did surprise me was that Malvy had nothing to do with Caillaux. At the time I purposely refrained from asking questions from the inside about the Malvy matter, though I happened to be in Paris at the time of the trial. I never knew Malvy even by sight, although the French Embassy in London told me about a political police report in which it was stated that when I was in San Sebastian I had gone to see him.

Anyway, according to Painlevé, Malvy and Caillaux had fallen out before the war, but, on the other hand, there was a personage who insisted that Malvy should be Minister of the Interior, and should be kept in successive Cabinets, and that person was no other than Poincaré, who, however, abandoned Malvy when the latter was accused.

By the way, when Painlevé arrived at Colombo (Ceylon) recently on his way back from China, he

* M. Painlevé was entirely mistaken on this point. Some weeks later I spent a day with M. Caillaux at Dijon, and found him in the best of health, and vigorous both physically and mentally.

found that Clémenceau had landed that same morning on his way to India, and as Painlevé was motoring back from Government House to the boat his car crossed that of Clémenceau's; their eyes met, but they passed without saluting each other.

November 19th.

Dined with L. M., but was too tired to be greatly amused or to talk much. A couple of big Sucriers, French born in Mauritius, L. M. and his wife, myself and Philippe Crozier. The latter was once Directeur du Protocole (and rather a fine figure he must have been), and afterwards was French Ambassador at Vienna, retiring a couple of years before the war.

At dinner they told several good stories about the *nouveaux riches*. L. M. vouched for the truth of one that was told him by one of the directeurs of the Opera. Recently a man and his wife asked for the best box in the house. When they were told which it was, they were insistent to be sure that there was none better. They were told that they could have it on any night which was not an *abonné* night, and that Saturday was, therefore, the first free evening. They took it for that evening without even asking what was going to be played. As they were going away the man was heard to say to the woman, "It is a nuisance to have a *loge* for eight when there are only two of us," and on the way out he stopped the *gardien de la paix* and asked him, "Aimez-vous la musique?" The *gardien*, rather taken aback, said, "Mais oui, monsieur, j'aime bien la musique." "Alors," said the other, "voulez-vous venir avec ma femme et

moi-même samedi soir ? Nous avons la meilleure loge dans la maison."

Someone else capped this by an incident of which he had been a witness at Larue's quite recently. A man came with his wife. The man, from the state of his hands, etc., apparently had been an ordinary workman. After ordering his dinner, he asked for the wine list. The person telling the story being next to him (and there is no space between the tables at Larue's), was able to see that he did not look at the wines but simply at the prices. He then pointed out to the *sommelier* the one he wanted, indicating merely the price ; it happened to be 120 francs. When it came it proved to be a magnum of champagne. The man was rather taken aback by the size of the bottle, as the *sommelier* must have been by the order, and asked what wine it was. The *sommelier* answered that it was a " magnum of champagne," to which the man muttered that he " had never heard of any wine called ' magnum.' "

November 23rd.

I telephoned to-day to X, partly to hear his views about the Grecian situation, but mainly to confirm my suspicion that, now that Venizelos had fallen, he had gone back to Athens. I was right ; he left for Greece three days ago.

When I last saw X he told me that, despite his close intimacy with Constantine, he had fallen out with him during the war. I think that that was true to this extent, that X thought (and rightly) that Constantine was backing the wrong horse. On the other hand, X had no liking for Venizelos.

In considering the defeat of the latter it is impossible to acquit Venizelos of negligence in not taking more trouble about the interior situation during his long absences abroad, and of his followers and colleagues of stupidity in doing nothing to help themselves and their position during these absences.

But when that has been said, it is difficult to find words to express one's opinions of the Greeks, who, by reason of V. having driven out Constantine, and through his work on the Peace Conference, got their territory extended to within eighteen miles of Constantinople, then turn out Venizelos in order to bring back a foreign prince, who nearly ruined their country by his devotion to the Kaiser and his treachery to the Allies. Apart from base ingratitude, it looks at first sight like rank stupidity—the idea that Constantine will be allowed to benefit by his own misconduct. But, perhaps, the Greeks are counting upon the stupidity of the Allies, which is of no small account. To-day England wants to tell Greece what will happen to her only *after* Constantine returns. France—as usual, more logical—wants to give the definite warning before.

One point which has not yet been referred to in the Press is important: the effect which all this may yet have on the fortunes of the British Royal Family. The idea that Constantine—who deliberately led the British and French sailors into a trap where they were slaughtered—Constantine, who has always been considered to be specially protected by our Court, should be allowed to return to Athens; that, and the Roumanian-Greek marriages (the Queen of Roumania being a British princess), all that may come up at an awkward moment and have a far-reaching effect.

But certainly that monkey which bit the unfortunate young King of Greece has interfered with the course of international affairs about as much as any animal known to modern history.

November 22nd.

Went to see Joseph Reinach this morning, and spent an hour with him, talking chiefly about Gambetta. He said that there was absolutely no doubt—the Bismarck-Gambetta interview never took place, though it was true that it had been contemplated. Also that Madame Juliette Adam's *Memoirs* were mainly a pack of lies where they referred to Gambetta. There was no doubt that, after her husband's death, she wanted to marry Gambetta, but the latter was faithful to Madame Léonie Léon. J. R. himself, years ago, broke off relations with Madame J. R. (or did she do it ?), who, from having been an ardent Republican, became a confirmed Clerical. The photographs he showed me of Gambetta make him look much older than I fancied him ; he was really only forty-three or forty-four when he died, but looked much more. Distinctly Jewish features.

Talked of Charles Dilkes' relations with Gambetta. In France they thought that Dilke had an undue influence over Gambetta while, on the other hand, Bismarck thought that Gambetta controlled Dilke (who was then Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), whom he looked upon as a French spy. Mentioned my view about the British Royal Family and Constantine's return to Greece, and J. R. replied that it was curious, he had said the same thing to Millerand a few days ago.

Spoke of Caillaux. Reinach said that he was "brought up on the laps of duchesses." His father was an Orleanist, and was in the brief Ministry of the Duc de Decazes after the Seize Mai. Caillaux was *aristocratique* (the word is J. R.'s) and was too much inclined in political life to say or to indicate that he did not regard one person or another as being *de son monde*.

J. R. thought (and I agree) that if Caillaux had acted differently during the war, if he had only just kept quiet, he would have been in a Cabinet before the war was finished. He also thinks that he may well come back. That is more doubtful, though any resurrection is possible in French political life.

I wonder what he does at Hamers ?

December 8th.

Painlevé lunched with me, alone, the day before yesterday. He attached importance to the prospect of strained relations between the U.S.A. and England ; but I do not think there is much in it.

Yesterday lunched at the Cercle Inter-Alié with X to meet Paul Dupuy, now a Senator (like his father, whom I know), and the director of the *Petit Parisien*. He told me that he had just entered into an arrangement with the *Times* to have the exclusive right in France to their news. Up to now *Le Matin* has had this arrangement, but Northcliffe broke with them on account of their recent anti-English and anti-Lloyd George campaign. Apparently Northcliffe took the stand that he can blackguard Lloyd George, but that a foreign newspaper must not do so off its own bat. To me it is an unexpected, but by no means unpleasant,

sidelight on Northcliffe's character. Dupuy agreed that Northcliffe had a great deal of the woman in his make-up.

After luncheon, Painlevé and Franklin-Bouillon, who were lunching together, joined us. The latter is both heavier physically and more *pondéré* in his *propos* than he was wont to be ; the latter change is a decided improvement. He sees little chance of getting back to the Chambre at present. Has just returned from Turkey.

■

CHAPTER VIII

OUR ALLY FRANCE

IF Europe should ever be retaken by the catastrophe of another general war, the British Empire would be unable to remain passive. Her own security would demand her participation. At the League of Nations meeting in Geneva a few months ago, Mr. Fisher blandly waved aside certain disarmament proposals by saying in effect that England was only indirectly interested in disarmament as she was protected on all sides by the sea. There may have been many good reasons why the suggestions made by M. Henri de Jouvenel were unacceptable; or, possibly even, there were many reasons which justified Mr. Fisher in not wanting to discuss their merits; but it is difficult to imagine any excuse for such a fatuous statement.

Probably Mr. Fisher was acting on instructions from Downing Street. But he can hardly have forgotten the air raids during the war, or that until the very end the authorities feared an attempt at invasion. He can hardly have forgotten the scarcity of food, caused mainly by the fact that we were "protected on all sides by the sea." Nor can he be ignorant that guns have already been produced which could have bombarded the British coast from

the other side of the Channel. While it can be confidently predicted that within twenty years our situation will be still more exposed. It is impossible to predict exactly what the future will bring forth ; but some index may be taken from the past. Less than fifteen years ago, when theirs was the only aeroplane which had ever left the ground and made a flight, Orville and Wilbur Wright, on account of their British descent, were anxious that Great Britain should be the first country in Europe to gain by their invention.

They therefore approached both the War Office and the Admiralty in turn upon the question of disposing of certain rights. They offered to give any trial or exhibition which might be required ; all they wanted was that judgment should be passed after an investigation. However, that usual procedure was reversed—and judgment was given first. Both Lord Haldane and the late Lord Tweedmouth, who was then at the Admiralty, courteously but definitely refused to have anything to do with the matter upon the ground that aeroplanes could be of no practical service. Lord Tweedmouth, if I remember aright, expressed the opinion that they would only be toys in war-time.* The recollection that this was only seven or eight years before the outbreak of the war in which aeroplanes played such a rôle, that not to possess them spelt sure disaster, should make anyone hesitate and reflect that much may happen in the next decade before boasting about an island's security.

Whether general disarmament will ever be feasible is

* Lord Haldane and Lord Tweedmouth were not the only ones to make errors of this nature. Von Tirpitz has told how difficult it was to convince the German authorities that submarines could be of any practical use in time of war.

questionable. Still more doubtful is its present practicability. But if and when it becomes possible, it will be of vital interest to Great Britain. In the meantime, she is bound, both for the sake of peace and for her own safety, to have an alliance which will discourage any nation from provoking a continental war, and which may check any country which does precipitate a conflict. Such an alliance can only be with France or with Germany. For though in a comparatively short time Russia may emerge in such a fashion as to change the whole complexion of European affairs, yet to-day any war, wherever the spark might come from, would centre round the antagonism of those two countries. For us there is only one conceivable choice.

As an ally, France has a weakness which is militating against her more seriously every year. Although obliged by her position to seek alliances or guarantees, yet, in one respect, she is not doing her utmost, or even her fair share, for her own protection. The full gravity and the certain consequences which will ensue if she continues along the path she is now treading are not sufficiently realised either in France or in England. The thriftiness which is a component part of the French character, coupled with the restricted freedom of testamentary disposition which, speaking in general terms, compels the division of property amongst all the children, has had the effect of lowering the birth-rate to a point which is quite abnormal. In 1801 the population of France was more than three times that of England and Wales. In 1851 it was more than double. In 1881 France had 37,000,000 inhabitants and England and Wales 26,000,000. By

1901 the figures were respectively 39,000,000 and 32,500,000, and in 1921, 39,400,000 and 37,800,000.

More interesting is the comparison with Germany ; but I have first given English figures to show that the difference is caused not so much by the high German birth-rate (although it is high) as by the extraordinarily diminished French one.

In 1816, the countries which between 1870 and 1917 formed the German Empire, excluding Alsace and Lorraine, had a population of 25,000,000, while France had 29,500,000. By 1850 each had the same number, about 35,000,000. While the figures from 1871 (although allowance must be made for the fact that at that date Alsace and Lorraine was lost by France and added to Germany) are as follows :

YEAR.		GERMANY.		FRANCE.
1871	..	40,997,000	..	36,190,000
1881	..	45,421,000	..	37,590,000
1891	..	49,762,000	..	38,350,000
1901	..	56,874,000	..	38,980,000
1911	..	65,359,000	..	39,602,000

France has to-day the strongest army in Europe. The recent recruiting law is based upon a yearly class or contingent of 250,000 white troops. But it is calculated that there will not be more than 225,000 men to call to the colours annually between 1931 and 1934. While on account of the small number of births during the war (1914-19) there will not be more than 160,000 available for the years 1934-39. The law of 1922 provides for an army of 673,000, of whom 465,000 are white troops. But it seems that in little more than ten years the latter will not exceed 300,000.

The further these calculations are pursued the darker becomes the picture. Enough has been said to show that the inequality between France and Germany is likely to become more marked. While unless the French race begins to exhibit some unselfishness in the matter, or some instinct of self-preservation (one may put it either way), it will soon sink to a position of inferiority which will have its repercussion upon any alliance. The record of the French Colonial troops is too high to be in need of any praise. It is no reflection upon them to say that any idea that France can maintain her position in the world with a sinking natality simply because she will be able to fill gaps in her army by native soldiers is sadly misleading. Nor will it only be the army which will suffer. The country is already feeling the evil effects of this widespread egotism. It was a Frenchman, Mirabeau, who truly said, "*La disette d'hommes est le pire de tous les maux pour une nation ; il en arrête l'essor.*"

It is always (and never more so than to-day) an inestimable advantage to have an ally whom we know is secure alike against revolutionary aggressions from without and any serious internal disorders, and who at all times—even at the most critical—is certain to honour her national engagements. The defection of Russia, and what it cost this country in blood and money, is not forgotten.

But while it is simple to demonstrate why Bolshivism will never flourish in France, it is sometimes more difficult to show to what extent that country is deeply imbued with Conservatism. In England there is a widespread impression (which has even been that of some politicians who ought to have known better)

that French groups or parties are all actuated by very advanced, radical views. Perhaps the fact that France is a republic has fostered this strange notion ; but I am inclined to think that the misleading names of many groups, of which the French Parliament consists, are largely responsible for this initial error.

Socialist Republicans, the Republican and Democratic Left, the Republican and Socialist Entente, and many similar titles, are apt to ring strangely on English ears, and to conjure up visions of extremists who will not stop short even of violence, if violence be necessary, to enforce their theories. But no conception could well be further removed from the reality. The great majority of French politicians are Conservative to their marrow-bones. "What I have I hold," is the basis of their creed, while French statesmen (and France possesses more capable statesmen than any country in Europe) are, for the greater part, convinced that a prudent course is what France needs to-day. That is the opinion firmly held even by some who were bred in Socialism. For it is a strange phenomenon that a considerable proportion of political leaders in France began their careers as noisy Socialists, although they to-day preach and practise a creed which in this country would cause them to be labelled strict Conservatives. The only jarring note would be the constant repetition of their Republicanism, which is the profession of faith common to all French politicians—except the Communists. But that is merely a declaration of loyalty to the established and existing régime—which, in itself, is almost a sign of innate Conservatism.

When Mr. Gladstone was member for Newark

Macaulay referred to him as the hope of the stern and unbending Tories. Yet Mr. Gladstone died a confused and a confusing Liberal. On the other hand, Joseph Chamberlain, who, with Dilke, was in the early eighties accused of being a subversive Republican, became a Conservative and an Imperialist. But in English public life the number of those who attracted notice by their advanced ideas, and who subsequently developed into Conservative leaders, begins and ends with the former.*

Despite hopes in some quarters and fears in others, there was never any great chance of a similar evolution in the case of Mr. Lloyd George. Indeed, opportunists do not evolve, for that presupposes a continuity of movement in some one direction. But I imagine that the question was one which for some years puzzled Sir George Younger. It was long before that discreet and cautious Scot arrived at a definite conclusion; but when he finally decided that no Conservative majority could control Mr. Lloyd George, he also resolved that Mr. Lloyd George should not long use a Conservative majority for his personal ends. The former Prime Minister will eventually be very much more at home in his present surroundings. The touch of demagogism in his character has never disappeared. He was obliged to control it while kept in power by Conservative votes. But it peeped out immediately in the first speeches he made after leaving office, and he will now be able to exercise it to his heart's content.

Upon the whole, there have been few conversions

* Lord Hartington, and the other Whigs who separated from Gladstone on the Home Rule question, and eventually became Conservatives, fall into quite another category.

of Liberals to Conservatism which are sufficiently startling to deserve being recorded. The older Liberals of to-day still have a tinge of the doctrinaire (especially in their attitude towards any tariff question) which is just as much an impediment to any evolution as is the opportunism of Mr. Lloyd George. The newer generation of Liberals is quite unhampered in that respect ; but its marked tendency is to drift towards the Labour party. Indeed, the only way to transform a convinced Liberal into a sincere Conservative is to make him a peer. Statistics of that operation show that the percentage of successes is notably high.

In France these changes are slower but more consistent. There is a period of well-regulated and orderly developments, undisturbed by either retreats or deviations. The logical French cannot understand anything else, and what they cannot understand they often detest and always fear. They lost all confidence in Mr. Lloyd George precisely because they found his vagaries so incomprehensible. A French politician who gravitates at a decent pace from the extreme Left towards the Right is not regarded unfavourably by his early associates, except sometimes on personal grounds. But there is no sympathy in France for a politician who oscillates.

One of the most notable personages in the Chamber of Deputies, whose brilliant oratory charms his hearers whenever he ascends the tribune, and who, by character and intelligence, is eminently qualified to hold office (I am by no means sure that he wants to) has never been offered a portfolio, simply because his course is uncertain. His sincerity is unquestioned—is, indeed, much more unquestionable than that of many of his

colleagues. But when he pronounces a judgment no one can ever be sure that he will not himself repudiate it a few months later. I refer to M. Forgeot.

The men who govern France are to-day the same who presided over her destinies before 1914. Since M. Clémenceau's retirement there have been four Prime Ministers—Millerand, Leygues, Briand, and Poincaré. Some of them had held that post before; all of them had been included in various Ministries. To-morrow it might be M. Barthou or (but much less likely) M. Viviani, both former Prime Ministers, or M. Raoul Péret, or one of several others who have already been in office. Even the Radical leadership has not passed into new hands. M. Caillaux may, perhaps, be called its unavowed Chief; certainly he is its most notable figure. While M. Herriot and M. Painlevé* are its most active members.

M. Millerand is the champion of constituted authority; yet his political origin would have led anyone to predict for him a very different career, and a far different ending.

Who remembers to-day that in 1880 Alexandre Millerand was a Radical Socialist (which in those days meant something much more really radical than it does to-day), and that it was by defending strikers who had resorted to criminal acts that he began to make his name at the Bar? At that period his speeches were those of a demagogue, and he was, I think, a contributor to *La Lanterne*. Even some years later Waldeck-Rousseau was bitterly reproached for his

* M. Painlevé's activities, however, are mainly confined to speeches in the provinces. He is somewhat out of touch with the present Chamber.

leanings towards the Extreme Left because he took Millerand into his Cabinet.

But after that the latter's progress was consistent. He acquired one of the greatest commercial practices at the Paris Bar, and acted for many of those capitalistic organisations which he had attacked in his briefless days. Throughout the war (during and after his passage at the Rue St. Dominique) he adhered to L'Union Sacrée; later he became a pillar of the Bloc National. His political expansion was quite in keeping with the authoritative nature of his character, and he went to the Elysée after announcing (almost defiantly) that, unlike his predecessors, he intended to exercise all the powers which the Constitution conferred on the President of the Republic.

That marked an advance to a point far removed from the days when Alexandre Millerand was one of the rising hopes of the Socialist party. But the progress had been equally consistent and honest.

Still more interesting is the career of M. Briand. To-day Briand is beginning to show his age. One notices that he is heavier, that his shoulders seem more bowed, and even that he appears more sombre than of yore; and as one never thinks of him as being old, it is with surprise that one realises that he is now sixty years of age. He has been Prime Minister six times.

The man who holds this remarkable record sprang from the most modest origins. The same thing may be said of many French politicians who, at the Bar or on the Press, worked hard in the lean days which led to eminence. But while Briand had his lean days—indeed, they were of the leanest—he never worked

hard for any length of time. A lawyer, he never obtained, and probably never had any great ambition to obtain, any considerable practice. He wrote for various newspapers (amongst others, *La Lanterne*) in order to provide himself with daily bread ; but he had neither liking nor instinct for journalism. While Millerand and Viviani were struggling to get clients, Briand was amusing himself, so far as it was possible to do so in the relative poverty and the positive uncertainty of his material position. Perhaps that period of his career may be best illustrated by recalling (it does not seem so very long ago) that there was often some confusion between the personalities of Aristide Briand, future Prime Minister of France, and Aristide Bruant, then an improvident Montmartre *chansonnier*, who died a few years ago.

His intellect was brilliant, and the tolerant indulgence, which he always extended to others as well as to himself, rather concealed a strong vein of shrewdness. He was a natural orator ; but there was nothing meridional in character. He was no Numa Roumestan. For though he might use his talent to persuade, or, within legitimate political limits, to deceive, others, he never deceived himself. Perhaps his greatest asset was the charm of a personality which neither criticised nor envied his fellows. It made enemies of few men. It pleased almost all women. M. Briand has never married.

Briand, like Millerand, forced an entry into political life as a Socialist. Representing some obscure syndicate, with which he had no earthly connection except that it served his purpose, he played a noticeable part at a Socialist or Labour Congress. Only

those who know Briand can realise how easy it was for him to do that—and how well he did it. That was a stepping-stone to the Chamber; and the day he was elected he began to shed his Socialism. He was, if I remember aright, the reporter of the law separating State and Church. Certainly as a Minister (which he soon became) it fell to his lot to apply that law; and he did so without any of that virulence which is the mark of the disciples of Jules Ferry. But if Ferry knew much that Briand did not and never will know (the least intellectual of men, the serious books which Briand has read could quickly be counted), he knew what the austere Ferry never imagined and would never have admitted—the elasticity of human nature and the allowance that should be made for those from whom one differs. Yet he showed the energy which he can summon when occasion demands when he crushed a dangerous railway strike by the simple expedient of calling all the employees to the colours, thus putting them under martial law. It was a courageous act, but hardly that of a Socialist. While only last year, M. Briand, who enforced the Separation law, was responsible for the resumption of diplomatic relations between France and the Vatican.

M. Briand's rapid success in the *Chambre des Députés* was not due only to his oratory. He is a great parliamentarian: in my opinion, the greatest in his time in either France or England. For he combines in an extraordinary degree the qualities which count for success in that rôle; he always makes friends in the lobby, but he dominates when he speaks from the tribune. Any comparison with English politicians must take into account the vastly greater

difficulties which confront a French Prime Minister. Everything depends upon what he himself does or does not do. He has neither any weapons which he can hold over the head of recalcitrants nor any buffer which he can place between himself and them. They were not elected to support him personally. If he falls, his successor will probably pursue the same policy, and may retain the majority of his colleagues. He has not the power to force a dissolution. There are no Whips who can bring influence to bear. In brief, his tenure of office always hangs by a thread. If M. Briand has been six times Prime Minister it is because he, more than any other French politician, is a most adroit parliamentarian.

In recent years M. Briand has been welcomed in the Faubourg St. Germain and has become the friend of princesses. Yet withal he has not greatly changed. His vision remains in every respect clear and unclouded. One could never apply to him Stendhal's saying that for a bourgeois every duchess is only twenty years old; but then, though one might call M. Millerand "un bourgeois rangé," one would never dream of employing that term in describing M. Briand.

A few months ago the newspapers published a story that a gendarme having met him on a country road, and having thought that he looked like a suspicious character, asked for his papers. As these were not forthcoming, he was led to the nearest police-station, when the abashed agent found that he had arrested the most famous of former Prime Ministers and was consoled for his error by a bottle of wine. I believe that the story was an invention, but it might well have been true.

Briand's laziness is proverbial. His favourite amusement is fishing, and the only time he was induced to play golf the result was disastrous. The Cannes game will pass into history. But he is by no means without ambition. He takes a curious pride in the number of times he has been Prime Minister, and he is always anxious to increase it. He urged Millerand to go to the Elysée, and thought that he would then be called upon to form a Ministry, a disappointment which he shared with Poincaré.

The circumstances of M. Briand's recent fall from office were more injurious to his political reputation than any other event in his career. His initial mistake was in going to Washington: Mr. Lloyd George was wiser; but Briand's turn will probably come again.

He has been accused of having no political principles. The reproach is equally unfounded and unjust. His curious character, his flexibility, the marked originality of a mentality which perhaps has no great depth, do not allow him to fit into the prepared mould of a French group. For years he was not inscribed as a member of any. Latterly he has been classed as a Socialist Republican. Anyone who has followed the policy which M. Briand has pursued during the last ten years, and still more anyone who knows him, will realise that he has nothing in common (except possibly the accident of political birth) with what a Socialist Republican would be in England.

M. Briand affords a striking example of Gallic adaptability. It is impossible to imagine the son of a small English innkeeper who, so far from being studious, spent the early days of his manhood in comparatively harmless dissipations, who never at

any time of life read or cultivated the intellectual side of his character, suddenly and naturally taking his part and holding his own amongst European statesmen. Mr. Winston Churchill's gibe that Labour was unfit to govern was absurd. The natural abilities of the rank and file of the Labour party do not fall below the average level of those of their opponents.

I have no doubt that when they attain office their sincerity will tide them over any difficulties which some of them may experience from the material disadvantages arising from their origin. But I admit that they will be more at home if by chance they are called upon to deal with the leaders of other Labour parties than they will be if placed in personal contact with those of another world. Mr. Lloyd George himself did not spring (any more than did Disraeli) from what used to be known as the governing class. But he had the advantage of a puritanical upbringing; and in England puritanism is a running start in the race for success in life. M. Briand was entirely outside that pale. But his natural simplicity, and that lack of self-consciousness which is so alien to the Anglo-Saxon character, counteracted that handicap.

Those qualities are noticeable in every section of the French people, even amongst the great bourgeois, I recollect that one day, some two years ago, I lunched with M. and Madame Caillaux at a small hotel in a French provincial town. After luncheon I spent the afternoon in the public park, while M. Caillaux expounded to me his views about the past and the future—views with which I was largely out of sympathy, although I appreciated the singular lucidity with which he was able to express them. Before I

left, M. Caillaux asked me to have tea with him. When the tea came to the bedroom, Madame Caillaux remarked, "Joseph, you know I don't like those cakes. Will you please go to the *pâtisserie* and get me some of the small ones I generally have?" And Joseph Caillaux, the former Prime Minister, by nature the most arrogant man I know in France, went, and in a few minutes came back with some excellent cakes in a little paper bag. I thought at the time that there was a simplicity one would never find in England—except possibly in a very great family. Mr. Lloyd George would undoubtedly have sent a servant. While, if it is ever my good fortune to take tea with a Labour Prime Minister, I am quite sure that any shortcoming in the repast will be rectified by one of the footmen paid for by Lord and Lady Lee's generous foundation.

M. Viviani is another example of a French politician who began as a Socialist and who has graduated gracefully to other spheres.

René Viviani, who is of Italian descent, was born in Algeria of obscure parents. His chief asset when he arrived in Paris was that he could speak eloquently about anything—as he can do to this day. He is often said to be the greatest orator in France. Certainly his periods are well rounded and sonorous; but they do not often express any original ideas. These famous speeches, with never a word misplaced, are captivating for the moment. But when one reads them it is painfully apparent that they are not those of a thoughtful man, or even one of ordinary cultivation. They sometimes betray his origin, just as

do his occasional rough outbursts of temper. For he has none of the suavity of M. Briand.

Nevertheless, M. Viviani's eloquence (which even yet wins him many a triumph) was the foundation of his political fortunes. Like M. Millerand and M. Briand, he first distinguished himself as a Socialist. If he did not at heart remain one longer, he at least found it more difficult to outgrow the reputation he gained in his early days ; for it is not many years ago that he was still thought to be dangerous. But even before the war the political world was convinced that he had become a safe and sound bourgeois. Although not a jurist like M. Millerand, he never abandoned the Bar as did M. Briand ; and from pleading in sensational cases, he finally obtained a surer and more lucrative practice. A member of several Cabinets, he was Prime Minister when the conflict broke out ; and the calmness and dignity he showed during the trying days preceding the declaration of war were beyond all praise ; it may be added that in some quarters they were unexpected. Since then M. Viviani has represented his country in various capacities, and represents her to-day in the League of Nations at Geneva. But he has shown no desire to return to office.

Such, in brief, has been the progress of three men, each of whom as a Socialist made speeches of far more notable violence than have either Mr. Clynes or Mr. J. H. Thomas at any stage of their careers ; and each of whom is to-day quite as moderate as Mr. Bonar Law.

Others who may hold office in the near future never were extremists and are as equally solid in their conservatism as the distinguished converts to whom I have referred. Of these the most interesting is M.

Louis Barthou. A Deputy for thirty years or more, he has been included in at least ten Ministries, and has also been Président du Conseil. He has always been an opponent of the Socialists, and he earned their undying animosity when he passed the Three Years' Service law. Although distinctly of the Left, M. Barthou has been suspected of clericalism. However, that is not the crime it was ten years ago. To-day it is hard to realise that before 1914 a member of any Government would have been taking his political life in his hands if he had been seen at church ; * and the President of the Republic would never have dared to send anyone to represent him at a commemorative service.

M. Barthou is a Béarnais. As befits a compatriot of D'Artagnan, he is moderately intriguing, decidedly subtle, and by no means impervious to flattery. Perhaps the weakest point in his political armour is the suspicion that he is not always impeccably loyal to his leader. This legend grew out of his conduct when he was in M. Méline's Ministry a quarter of a century ago ; and I know of nothing more recent to support it.

He is a member of the Académie Française ; and of all French politicians he has the best right to be called literary. But he not only writes books, he reads them, buys them, and keeps them. He is known to all the great London booksellers.

M. Barthou is now President of the Reparation Commission. If anything is to be got from Germany, he and M. Poincaré, working together, are more likely

* Jaurès was always accused of having sent his daughter to a convent under an assumed name.

to obtain it than are any two other Frenchmen. In any event, Barthou is one of the outstanding possibilities as the next Prime Minister ; but so are several of the politicians of his generation. Or, again, when, in the fulness of time, M. Poincaré leaves office, M. Loucheur may, perhaps, get an opportunity to prove that he is right in thinking that he is equally gifted as a statesman and as a business man. Or, by sheer force of character, M. Tardieu may impose himself upon a majority that hates his confident self-sufficiency. But whoever it may be will continue M. Poincaré's policy, however much he may seek to improve on his methods of enforcing it. Whoever it may be will seek to obtain payment from Germany, not with the idea of crushing that country, but because France is in desperate need of financial relief. Whoever it may be will avoid embarking upon any military adventure ; and, above all, will cherish an alliance with this country, if our Government will go anything like half-way. In short, I do not believe that there will soon be any political upheaval in France.

It is sometimes said that the present Chamber does not represent the country. That is rather a loose saying, and, like all loose sayings, difficult to interpret. Does it mean that the Bloc National has not carried out its election promises ? Or that the country has changed its views since the election ?

If the former, the reproach cannot fairly be levelled at the majority in the present Chamber. Each Prime Minister whom it has put in power has tried, to the best of his ability, to perform what was promised. Herbert Spencer said that a government ought to be a little, but only a little, in advance of public opinion,

The French Ministries of the last three years have complied with that requisite. They have really led and shown the way, in striking contrast to Mr. Lloyd George's Government which, despite its large majority in the House of Commons, was time and again forced by a newspaper agitation to take up one measure or to abandon another.

If the latter meaning is to be ascribed to the phrase, it is simply a conjecture, the truth of which can only be tested at the next general election. Political prophecies are notoriously dangerous; but I will risk the prediction that the Radical Socialists will not defeat the Bloc National. If the latter have an excess of leaders from whom to choose, the former have practically none. M. Herriot, who seems to be perpetual Mayor of Lyons, is more active than forceful. M. Painlevé will not rouse the country. Despite the hostility he would excite, the Radical Socialists might have more chance of success were M. Caillaux their avowed leader. But only a national catastrophe, such as a serious financial collapse, will make that feasible.

The Left will, doubtless, be stronger in the next Chamber; but I believe that the Bloc National will still have a majority.

■

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW DIPLOMACY

THE posthumous public act of the late M. Deschanel was to compare the new methods of diplomacy with the old ones, to the disadvantage of the former. As he truly pointed out, the latter did not exclude interviews between the heads of Governments, but the matter of those interviews was then prepared in advance, and not left to chance.* Lord Grey has complained that there is now more secrecy than ever before ; for whereas it had been the practice to keep, and very often to publish, the *précis verbaux* of diplomatic conversations, the new fashion consists in the public being told that the Prime Ministers of France and England have had a conversation together, and having to be content with that sparse information. M. Paul Cambon once remarked : " On dit que la vieille diplomatie adore les secrets et parle peu ; mais je trouve, moi, que la nouvelle diplomatie parle trop." While M. Poincaré, shortly before he succeeded M. Briand, summed up the whole situation succinctly as " cinema diplomacy."

* Speech on French Foreign Policy, which M. Deschanel was to have made in the Senate, March 31st, 1922, subsequently published by *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, under the title of " La Politique Extérieure de la France."

These opinions are in such absolute disaccord with those expressed by Sir Maurice Hankey (and held by the late Prime Minister and his entourage) that it is worth while seeing exactly what does go on behind the curtain. I propose to recount in some detail the most salient episode of the Genoa Conference, which has been told before but is far too little known, and the story of the London Conference of August, 1922. Between them they afford ample materials whereby anyone can decide for himself whether he agrees with Sir Maurice Hankey's eulogy of diplomacy by conference, or whether he concurs in the contemptuous comparison which M. Poincaré makes. The facts related are, for the greater part, not given in any official account, but they are facts which will not be authoritatively disputed.

At the Genoa Conference M. Barthou was the chief French representative, M. Poincaré having resolutely refused to be present himself, although he kept a firm hand on the proceedings, since Barthou's formal instructions forbade him to sign anything which had not first been submitted to and approved of by the Prime Minister. Nevertheless, at one stage Poincaré seems to have been doubtful whether Barthou was entering fully into the spirit of his instructions; and on May 3rd the latter was recalled to Paris to explain certain points. This was directly after the Belgians had refused, despite Mr. Lloyd George's objurgations, to give up their claim against Russia in respect to private property.

M. Barthou had hardly left Genoa when the French delegation received imperative orders from M. Poincaré to announce that their Government adopted the

Belgian view ; and to insist upon a new form of the most important clause (Article 6) in the memorandum which was to be sent to the Soviet representatives. It appeared later that this had been drafted by M. Poincaré himself. Moreover, while they did not oppose the memorandum being sent to the Russians, the French reserved their definite acceptance of it until it had been considered by the Cabinet.

The primary object of the Conference was to arrive at some understanding with Russia ; from the outset Mr. Lloyd George used all his energy (be it said to his credit) and employed all his arts to wring from France the necessary concessions so that this much-heralded Conference, upon which, for a moment, his own political future seemed to depend, might not end in a failure. But Poincaré's insistence that everything should be done in an orderly fashion and after calm deliberation, and his evident determination that loose conversations should play no part in the proceedings, were robbing Mr. Lloyd George of weapons and wiles which in the past had been profitably utilised. Some time before I had ventured to predict that in all negotiations Poincaré, "unlike Briand, will keep the British Prime Minister at arm's length," * and his course in respect to the Genoa meeting fulfilled that prophecy. His action, which resulted in placing France solidly side by side with Belgium, brought matters to a crisis.

On Saturday, May 6th, Mr. Lloyd George had a conversation with M. Philippe Millet, the political editor of *Le Petit Parisien*, in which he said that the Entente between France and England was in danger,

* See *The Pomp of Power*, p. 74.

that the English people no longer desired to maintain it, and that had it not been for his own efforts there would already have been a rupture.

Philippe Millet is one of the three clever journalists who are most in touch with English political life and who are most quoted in France on such subjects, the other two being "Pertinax" (M. André Géraud), of *L'Echo de Paris*, and M. Jules Sauerwein, of *Le Matin*. Millet has perhaps lived more in England than has either of his colleagues. In any event, he has an appreciation of our country and its public life which allows him to place the most favourable construction upon the attitude and intentions of our Government as shown from time to time. An excellent journalist, he is by nature excessively candid, and is somewhat disposed to believe that everyone else possesses that virtue in the same degree as himself. Mr. Lloyd George may reasonably have thought that Millet would be impressed by a solemn communication (and Millet was), and that his conviction of the risk which M. Poincaré was making France take would be conveyed to the two million readers of *Le Petit Parisien*.

The same day M. Barthou returned from Paris, and in the evening had an interview with Mr. Lloyd George. During their conversation (at which others were present) the latter pursued the same line. According to a Reuter dispatch, he spoke of "the ingratitude of France," and added that "in the future England would have to show herself less exclusive in her choice of Allies." But that was not all that was said.

The following day, Sunday, Mr. Lloyd George renewed his conversation with Philippe Millet. He

assured the latter that throughout England the anger with France was such that there were many open demands for a rupture of the Entente. He even produced before Millet certain letters to that effect, notably one from Lord Birkenhead. While, finally (although in this instance he did not bring out the letter), he said that the King had written that he was so tired of such conduct that he would not mind seeing the whole matter ended that way.

Decidedly, Mr. Lloyd George had impressed Millet this time. Possibly he had rather overdone it. Perhaps he had given him rather too heavy a load to carry all alone. For Millet, quite upset by the terrible picture which had been drawn of the fate of France, was unable to contain himself when, later in the day, he met "Pertinax." Repeating the British Prime Minister's sad predictions to "Pertinax" was an entirely different thing to telling them first to the two million readers of *Le Petit Parisien*. In fact, had Mr. Lloyd George a good story to tell—I mean one in which he was helping rather than using a journalist—he would have sent for "Pertinax." For there is no writer on the foreign Press whom he fears more, and therefore none whom he has so often (and so ineffectually) tried to cajole.

André Géraud is an entirely different type to Millet. I would not place him higher as a journalist, for, in fact, he is hardly a journalist at all. He is a great polemic; and, as such, has to-day, perhaps, more influence than any political writer in Europe. His newspaper does not give his views immense circulation; for *L'Echo de Paris*, although one of the most cleverly managed newspapers in France, appeals only to a

limited world. It is rather clerical in its tendencies, and decidedly *Académie Française* in the older sense of that term. Maurice Barrès, René Bazin, and several others who are entitled to wear the green uniform, are amongst its habitual contributors. It reached its zenith during the war, for its political relations were such that it got accurate information. If it has maintained its position since, it is largely due to the fact that many people want to read what "Pertinax" has written.

During the early years of the war Géraud was the London correspondent of *L'Echo de Paris*. About 1917, the political editor of that paper, M. Herbette, went over to *Le Temps*. Géraud was offered his succession, and I recollect his search for a name, as, for some reason, he did not wish to use his own. His choice was lucky. When I asked an acquaintance at the Wilhelmstrasse to explain his statement that he always read what "Pertinax" had to say before turning to the other French papers, he said: "The name impressed us from the start. It seemed to mean something solid."

André Géraud is a Bordelais. Rather stubborn in retaining his once acquired opinions, but with intellectual perceptions which, if somewhat complicated in their workings, are excessively quick, he has all the attributes of what he is, a meridional, together with an acute mentality developed (perhaps a shade prejudiced) by priests, who always know when they are moulding a brain of no ordinary capacity. In writing, Géraud plants darts where Sauerwein (a great journalist, but less of a polemic) swings a hammer. When he thinks it desirable he can be as candid as is Millet

naturally. But he does not attribute that quality to all the world, and, least of all, to Mr. Lloyd George.

Also he is impetuous to the verge of indiscretion. For it was Géraud who sent from the Washington Conference the telegram about an imaginary dispute between Schanzer and Briand, which even led to riots and loss of life in Italy. In brief, Géraud is somewhat ebullient; and it was to him that Millet confided what Mr. Lloyd George had revealed. It happened that Géraud (who always gets all the best information, together with some of the worst) already knew what Mr. Lloyd George had said to Barthou. In his own mind he had not the slightest doubt that the Prime Minister was making these representations about public opinion in England merely in order to bring influence to bear on Poincaré through the French Press.

If by chance it were not so (he might have argued), if Mr. Lloyd George was, as he had told Millet, the reluctant mouthpiece of the British public, there was no reason why the public should not know how faithfully their Prime Minister was communicating their views to the recalcitrant. Consequently Géraud saw Mr. Wickham Steed, then editor of the *Times*, and told him what Mr. Lloyd George had said to Millet, and what he had said to Barthou. The same night Steed sent a long dispatch to the *Times*, unfolding in detail the whole manœuvre.*

On Monday Mr. Lloyd George may possibly have been waiting to hear from Paris that the dire disclosures he had made to Millet had had some

* It is curious that Wickham Steed should have got this information through Géraud and not through Millet direct, for the latter's paper, *Le Petit Parisien*, takes the *Times* news service.

effect, especially some effect upon Poincaré's position. But, be that as it may, he certainly did not expect to get the news which, early in the afternoon, he received from London. For the *Times* dispatch said: "I find that I seriously underestimated the facts when, in my earlier message, I suggested that yesterday's interview between Mr. Lloyd George and M. Barthou was not entirely harmonious. According to reliable information the British Prime Minister spoke severely. Whatever allowances may be made for his disappointment at the failure of the Conference hitherto to give him the results for which he professed to hope, the fact remains that his language yesterday was in accord with the most extreme interpretations of his policy that his partisans have advanced. In substance he told M. Barthou that the Entente between Great Britain and France was at an end. Great Britain considered herself as henceforth free to seek and cultivate other friendships. His advisers had long been urging him to make an agreement with Germany, even at the cost of abandoning British claims of reparation. France had made her choice between British friendship and Belgian friendship. She had voted for Belgium, although the help she had received from Belgium was not comparable to the help she had received from Great Britain. The British Government felt very deeply the conduct of France.

"Henceforth France might stand alone with Belgium, and see what advantage that would bring her. He (Mr. Lloyd George) knew that what had happened was not M. Barthou's fault. M. Barthou had done his best to be conciliatory, but he had no freedom of action. British opinion was hostile to

France, and his (Mr. Lloyd George's) advisers, especially Lord Birkenhead, the Lord Chancellor of England, had been constantly advising him to break with France. Letters from all parts of the country gave him the same advice. In fact, he, the Prime Minister, was almost the only friend France had in England. But now he must look in another direction."

Before four o'clock that afternoon Mr. Lloyd George had sent his secretary, Sir Edward Grigg, and Sir Maurice Hankey to Barthou, with a letter requesting him to deny the accuracy of the news given in the *Times*. M. Barthou temporised, and before he had made up his mind what to do, the correspondent of the *Daily Mail* (Mr. Ward Price) obtained an interview with him. Obviously the object of this step was to get Barthou to confirm what had been published in the *Times*. In effect Barthou admitted to the *Daily Mail* representative that Mr. Lloyd George had told him that the alliance between England and France was in danger (a statement which Mr. Lloyd George had denied). But the British Prime Minister continued his efforts to get a written denial from M. Barthou; and about ten o'clock the same evening he received a reply with which he was forced to be satisfied. The correspondence exchanged reads as follows :

" MY DEAR BARTHOUS,

" I am informed that there appeared in the English newspapers to-day (Monday) a statement regarding our conversation on Saturday, which attributes to me a declaration to the effect that the Entente between France and Britain is at an end, and that

my advisers are pressing me to come to an understanding with Germany. I have already asked Mr. Chamberlain, who is acting Prime Minister in my absence, to contradict this malicious invention in Parliament this afternoon, and will be much obliged if you, on your side, will also contradict both statements. I request this because, as you know, I value Franco-British co-operation too highly to tolerate public misstatements regarding the official conversations on that subject at a moment of great importance in the relations of our two countries. I was a strong partisan of the Entente between France and Britain long before the war, and to me, as to every Englishman, that friendship means more since it was consecrated by common sacrifices. Hence my great anxiety that nothing should happen to divide the opinion of our two great democracies, upon whose partnership the peace of Europe so largely depends.

“ Believe me, yours sincerely.”

“ MY DEAR MR. LLOYD GEORGE,

“ You appeal to my testimony regarding the conversation which we had together on Saturday afternoon, and which has aroused so much comment. Here is my reply : You did not say that the Entente between Britain and France was at an end, nor did you say that your advisers were pressing you to come to an understanding with Germany. You spoke to me of the difficulties through which the relations of our two countries were passing, but you did not pronounce one word which could be interpreted as expressing the intention to break the friendship which unites us, and I retain all my confidence in our essential union.”

As a matter of fact, the *Times* account had not been accurate to the letter, though quite true in its essence. But Wickham Steed (whether intentionally or otherwise) had confounded the conversations which Mr. Lloyd George had had with Millet and with Barthou ; and he was in error in making it appear that certain letters (those from Lord Birkenhead and others) had been produced before M. Barthou ; that scene had only been enacted for Philippe Millet.

Mr. Lloyd George, who, with his keen sense of atmosphere, had felt that he was in a bad position, at once made every possible use of M. Barthou's letter. Late as it was, he assembled the English journalists that very evening, and read it to them in order that they might send it immediately to their papers.

Naturally, the matter did not entirely end there. Philippe Millet, who felt that the Prime Minister had made a tool of him, wrote an article in which he set forth the facts with a bluntness which would have called for a denial had any denial been possible. Wisely none was attempted. Wickham Steed confirmed his former dispatch by a statement which he obtained from Millet. But for some reason, which rests obscure, the *Times* did not publish this communication, and some days later Steed was recalled to London.

Mr. Lloyd George's scheme, therefore, did not have the desired effect on M. Poincaré ; but on the other hand, he was able to keep the public in England from realising exactly what he had said and done.

After that, seeing that it was futile to try to get sacrifices from France and Belgium in order to propitiate Russia, he turned entirely against the Soviet

delegates, and blamed them for the sterility of the Conference. Then, leaving to subordinates the task of gathering up the débris at the Hague, he forgot that, according to his former statements, the very salvation for Europe lay in success at the Genoa gathering, and turned his attention to other plans. It is impossible not to admire the prodigious cleverness of Mr. Lloyd George. For long he was able, without coming to grief, to excite hopes, and then to have failures which would have driven out of office the Prime Minister of almost any country except Germany. Possibly he was aided by the feebleness of his opponents, and by the ignorance of and the indifference to foreign affairs which is characteristic of the British electorate.

Such, in brief, is the story of the most striking episode of the Genoa Conference.

Certainly, to take Sir Maurice Hankey's words in praise of diplomacy by conference, it showed a certain "elasticity of procedure." But did it also display in a favourable light the "mutual acquaintance and, if possible, personal friendship among the principals, and a proper perspective between secrecy in deliberation and publicity in results," which he also vaunts? Or does it better illustrate M. Poincaré's phrase "cinema diplomacy"?

I turn to the London Conference.

M. Poincaré, M. de Lasteyrie, M. Theunis, M. Schanzer and M. Jaspar arrived in London on Sunday, August 6th, and were met by an imposing array of British politicians and officials, headed by Mr. Lloyd George; a striking contrast to the scene at their departure a week later. M. Poincaré, who was the

central figure of the Conference, is a Lorrainer, both by birth and temperament. He has all the qualities of his race.

M. de Lasteyrie was born in the central plateau of France (Corrèze), and has the characteristics which are attributed to the natives of that country—" *un homme rude et âpre*." He is not a man of any striking mental distinction. A hard worker, he would learn any lesson well, but could never be at all creative. He was an excellent reporter of the Budget, but is less in his place as Minister of Finance in these difficult times when a man of some imagination is needed.

Attached to the French delegation was M. Peretti della Rocca, a good Frenchman in spite of his Italian name. At present political Director at the Quai d'Orsay, he is thought to covet the succession of M. Jusserand at Washington. M. Peretti della Rocca is an excellent Foreign Office official. But he is incapable of filling the place of Philippe Berthelot, or of getting the influence which the latter speedily acquired in whatever *milieu* he might find himself.

M. Schanzer is also temperamentally true to his origin. He is, I believe, a Galician Jew. He brings to all negotiations the suppleness which is inherent in his race, the Slav imagination and the Italian love of a *combinazione*. Schanzer is essentially a man of compromises, who will return through the window when he has been ejected by the door. In London his was a colourless rôle, because he deliberately took care never to commit himself when he could possibly avoid it. He tried to please everyone and ended by pleasing no one. M. Schanzer has the air of a dreamer, but his aspect is somewhat deceptive. He was

seconded by M. Paratore, who, however, took no active part in the proceedings.

M. Theunis was formerly an artillery officer, and looks the part. His mentality is perhaps a shade heavy in quality, but he has a large measure of good sense ; moreover, he possesses sound knowledge of the financial situation. M. Theunis is very much at home in England, having been in London during the war as head of the Belgian Commission du Ravitaillement.

M. Jaspar constitutes a puzzle which has not yet been solved. A calm, self-restrained, silent man, he conveys the impression of a certain distinction. He has all the outward attributes which fancy associates with a Minister of Foreign Affairs. What actual force there is behind this mask has not yet been disclosed.

These were the statesmen who, with Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Robert Horne and Sir Worthington Evans, had the duty of finding some solution of a grave crisis. It is instructive to observe how they set about it.

It may fairly be said that only the French had any positive programme at all. Even this programme had been made at the last minute. Another one had been prepared earlier ; one which was of much wider range, and which treated as one problem the question of reparations and Inter-Allied debts. But it had been annihilated by the Balfour Note, which was expressly and unfairly issued on the eve of the Conference (August 1st). Undoubtedly that ill-advised document increased immeasurably, and was obviously bound to increase, the difficulty of any agreement between the Allies. Incidentally it rendered abortive the mission of M. Parmentier, who was then in Wash-

ington trying to effect some arrangement about France's debt to America. That responsibility must be borne by Mr. Lloyd George. However, the grossness of the manœuvre was too evident to escape notice. More than any other single act it caused other countries (including the United States) to question the late Prime Minister's good faith in his dealings with France.

The original French plan was, in brief, the reduction of the German debt and the cancellation of the Allied debts; the United States, of course, not taking any part in the transaction.

I venture to think that M. Poincaré made a grave tactical error when he entirely abandoned that programme. For whatever may have been the full object of the Balfour Note, it did not necessarily prohibit (though it certainly did not encourage and doubtless was meant to prevent) the discussion of reparations and debts together. The Note laid down the basic principle that if Great Britain was obliged to pay her debt to the United States, she could not forgo exacting payment of what the various Allies owed her. But that still left the doors open for a consideration of the question along the lines which Poincaré had first adopted. For the milliard pounds due by Great Britain to the United States could be balanced by the same amount owed to the former by her Allies, still leaving a further sum due from them of between two and three milliard pounds. This balance certainly provided a ground for possible combinations. But the effect of the unexpected Balfour Note was that the French Government hurriedly drafted a new and limited scheme, which

dealt only with the moratorium demanded by Germany, about which a decision was necessary before August 15th.

The proposal which M. Poincaré actually brought to London was, therefore, that a moratorium should be granted to Germany until the end of 1922 upon the conditions that Germany would give and agree to the following "productive" guarantees :

1. A customs barrier should encircle the Ruhr and the left bank of the Rhine.

2. A duty of 26 per cent. on exportations.

3. Revision of Customs.

4. The Allies should be given control of the mines and forests belonging to the State in the Ruhr and on the left bank of the Rhine.

5. The Allies should have control of certain German industries.

6. The Reichsbank should be reformed.

7. The Allies should establish a certain control over German finances.

Clearly this programme was a maximum, and M. Poincaré did not expect to have his suggestions adopted in their entirety. But it had the great advantage of being an affirmative proposal—a definite plan.

On the other hand, the English Government had not, at the beginning of the Conference, a programme of any kind whatever. It had an idea—a very simple one, but the extraordinary point is that Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues did not perceive beforehand that it would inevitably and naturally seem a shade too simple to the principal creditor—for the idea was :

"Germany asks for a moratorium; she must be given one. Until when? We don't quite know. The end of 1922? the end of 1923? We might discuss that point."

Inconceivable as it may appear, that was the proposal. There were no suggestions about the precautions to be taken to ensure that Germany paid later or the measures to be taken if she did not do so. The baldness of the plan in a Conference called in order to reconcile conflicting views and interests on matters of world-wide importance, as well as the fashion in which the negotiations were conducted, seems to indicate that Mr. Lloyd George's chief anxiety was to confound and destroy the plan of M. Poincaré.

The Belgian delegation also had an idea, but no concrete proposal. Its one concern was to prevent any rupture between England and France. The position of Belgium is peculiar, and, at present, none too comfortable. Politically, on account of her geographical position, she depends upon France; for, if she does not do so, she must depend upon Germany. But economically she depends to a large extent upon Great Britain. It is therefore essential for her that France and England should cleave together. This necessity was what M. Theunis and M. Jaspar had principally in mind when they arrived, and it pre-occupied them throughout the Conference. It is fair to add that, if any agreement had been reached, it would have been mainly due to their efforts.

The Italians did not have a programme of their own any more than did the Belgians. They supported Mr. Lloyd George whenever possible. On the rare occasions when they were unable to do that, they

took refuge in an attitude of benevolent neutrality. Moreover, as long as the question of Inter-Allied debts was not discussed, their interest in the Conference was necessarily limited. But in principle they were in favour of granting a moratorium to Germany.

As it was only M. Poincaré who had any full and tangible plan ready to submit, he was from the outset put in the position of defending his proposals. The Conference resolved itself into a succession of attacks, led by Mr. Lloyd George, upon the French project. As a whole it never began to be constructive. Partly on account of the Balfour Note, partly by reason of Mr. Lloyd George's personal frame of mind, it was simply a question of whittling down the French plan, accompanied by a great deal of talk about saving Germany, and noticeably less about the salvation of France.

It was, therefore, soon apparent that the success or the failure of the Conference depended upon whether M. Poincaré would yield sufficiently to meet the views of Mr. Lloyd George. The latter himself proposed nothing, except at the very end, and almost as an afterthought.

At the first meeting, on the morning of Monday, August 7th, M. Poincaré gave the details of his plan, which he supported in a speech delivered in that cold, clear and precise manner which made for his success at the Paris Bar. But the atmosphere of Downing Street is very different from that of the Palais.

In the afternoon, Mr. Lloyd George, M. Theunis and M. Schanzer successively attacked or criticised M. Poincaré's proposition. Mr. Lloyd George's tone

was particularly hard and at times even rough. The representatives of Belgium and Italy were struck both by his evident hostility to M. Poincaré, by the uncompromising character of his remarks, and by the fact that he spoke in a way entirely foreign to his usual habits at such meetings. Nor was Mr. Lloyd George any more accurate than conciliating. For it was upon this occasion that he stated that Germany had already paid ten milliards of gold marks in spite of three revolutions and the weakness of her Government.

The truth is that Germany had only at that time paid about seven milliards; the exact figure, since published by the Reparations Commission, of all the payments, whether in money, kind or otherwise, up to April 30th, 1922, is 6,977,567,729 gold marks. The only explanation ever given of this formidable error was that Mr. Lloyd George had taken the figures from a pamphlet issued by the Bankers' Trust Co. of New York, and had failed to notice certain deductions. Why it should have been necessary in such a matter for Mr. Lloyd George to resort to an unofficial calculation of an American financial institution seems all the more strange and mysterious when one remembers that only a few weeks earlier he had boasted to the House of Commons of the success of the new diplomacy, conducted by men of experience, aided by "the best experts in the world."

By the evening it was clear that the French plan would encounter formidable obstacles, and that it would be difficult to reach any agreement. As much in order to gain time as for any other reason the whole matter was referred to the experts. The next two

days were occupied in that way. At no period was a solution in sight, but an understanding was reached on various points. The French abandoned their demand for a control of certain German industries and a tariff wall encircling the Ruhr and the left bank of the Rhine. It is interesting to note that M. Poincaré ceded on the latter question because the Belgians pointed out that, if that proposal became operative, the Germans would undoubtedly send all their merchandise by way of Rotterdam, at the expense of the Port of Antwerp.

On the other hand, M. Poincaré was given satisfaction in respect to the reform of the Reichsbank (which was to consist in its complete separation from the German Government) and the control of German finances. The victory was not very great. For many months before Germany had promised to make the Reichsbank entirely independent; while the Committee of Guarantees (that hybrid offspring of the Reparations Commission) was already supposed to exercise a certain control over the financial operations of the Berlin Cabinet.

Moreover, it seemed probable that an accord might be reached on all the other suggested "productive" guarantees except the control of the mines and forests. From August 10th to 14th the debates centred on that question. In the end it wrecked the Conference. It was a drawn battle, ending in "an amicable disagreement by mutual consent." This new formula to cover political sterility was the main creation of the Conference.

It should be made clear that the mines and forests were those owned by the State, not private property,

in the Ruhr and on the left bank of the Rhine. What the French wanted was the control and the revenues of these mines and forests during the period of a moratorium. They proposed that in each case a manager chosen by the Allies, and responsible to the Reparations Commission, should be placed at the side of the German manager. Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues contended that this measure was impracticable because the German workmen would either refuse to work at all, or would do so in such a way as to reduce the profit to zero. The wisdom of the French plan is doubtful. But I am bound to say that the objection that it is impracticable seems quite untenable.

Obviously, this is debatable ground. But an examination of this very question in Germany led me to the conclusion that that country feared the taking over of the mines and the forests for very different reasons. The suggestion that there would be any trouble with the workmen was seldom advanced, and then more often than not as an obvious blind. Nor do I believe that there is any chance that it would have occurred unless instigated by the German Government itself, that is, unless the Reich acted in bad faith.

Be that as it may, the French left London persuaded (as were perhaps some of the other delegates) that the real trouble was that, in the conditions proposed by Poincaré, the Ruhr mines would have furnished coal to France and Italy in competition with English coal. For what it is worth, my own opinion is that that view does not rest on any solid basis. But I still more emphatically believe that the way in which Mr. Lloyd George conducted the negotiations was quite likely to give rise to such suspicions.

The Conference, therefore, broke down on the question of the control of the mines and forests belonging to the German State. But it is probable that, even if an agreement had been reached on that point, the ultimate result would have been the same. For there was an irreconcilable difference of opinion about the interpretation which should be given to the phrase, "productive guarantees." The French took it to mean guarantees which would yield something immediately. The English view was that whatever was thus obtained should be set aside in a reserve fund, to be taken only if Germany did not recommence to pay at the expiration of the moratorium.

There is undoubtedly some logic in the contention that it would be a contradiction to grant Germany a moratorium, and at the same time sequester part of her revenues. But the obvious explanation is the well-founded doubt whether, if the revenues came into its possession, the German Government would apply them towards reparation payments.

It was only on August 12th that the English counter-proposition was advanced. It would have been better had it never been made at all, for clearly it could have no other result than to convince the French that any co-operation was impossible, and to give rise in Berlin to hopes which will probably never be realised. For the proposal was, in effect, to grant a moratorium until the end of 1923, or even until 1924, and to deal with the question of payments to be made after that date in a way favourable to Germany but prejudicial to France. Moreover, it was evident that the plan, such as it was, had not been seriously studied by the experts. Apparently the only object was to enable

Mr. Lloyd George to say that he had suggested something.

On the first day of the Conference (August 7th), M. Poincaré had mentioned, rather hesitatingly, the project he had conceived before the appearance of the Balfour Note. But he had been immediately checked by Mr. Lloyd George, who referred him bluntly to terms of that pronouncement. Probably Poincaré would have done better had he either insisted on going into the matter then or if he had boldly reverted to that proposal, when it became certain that no agreement about a moratorium was possible. He could justly have said that the basis upon which he had accepted an invitation to the Conference had been to discuss the whole situation; and that after his acceptance the ground had been cut from under his feet, and the scope and nature of the Conference had been changed, by the British Government issuing that Note. Moreover, as stated above, the Balfour Note did not actually preclude the consideration of Inter-Allied debts.

If M. Poincaré had boldly taken it as a tentative starting-point and had developed the French programme of the reduction of the reparation claims, coupled with the annulment of debts between the Allies in the measure permitted by the Note, the effect would have been widespread and startling. An offer, involving the reduction of the German debt, was not one which the British Prime Minister could lightly have swept aside or could have refused to discuss.

But if M. Poincaré may be criticised for a certain timidity, Mr. Lloyd George's attitude throughout the

negotiations merits still more severe strictures. The French Prime Minister was always his usual self—cold, reserved, always self-restrained; not a good negotiator but a strong advocate upon strictly legal and political grounds. On the other hand, it is no exaggeration to say that Mr. Lloyd George allowed his personal antipathy to M. Poincaré to influence the proceedings. He summed up his position when he told a political supporter: "The French are now fixed in the idea that I am anti-French. It would be a loss of time to try to prove the contrary to them. And, anyway, it is impossible to work with Poincaré."

Unfortunately Mr. Lloyd George allowed his prejudices to be plainly perceived. It is no secret that his dislike for M. Poincaré equals in intensity that which Clémenceau possessed for Woodrow Wilson. Probably the French Prime Minister is not amongst Mr. Lloyd George's admirers. The two men are as far apart as the poles; but both Poincaré's training and his character prevent him from giving any exhibition of his sentiments or from ever deviating from the most correct attitude.

Mr. Lloyd George knows no such restraint. During the Conference he went away for the week-end to play golf, leaving to their own devices M. Poincaré and the other statesmen whom he had invited to come to England. As it happened, the immediate decision of the Prime Minister became necessary upon a proposal which was mooted that very day, and M. Schanzer was obliged to motor into the country to find him.

The bad impression created by this incident was quite comprehensible. The French in particular felt

that the representative of their country had been treated with gross discourtesy. The French Press gave voice to that feeling in tones which, in several instances, were lacking in suavity. But if some newspapers may be blamed, Mr. Lloyd George cannot well be defended. Even a journalist and politician of the position and dignity of M. André Tardieu remarked that the ill-will shown at the Conference by the British Prime Minister was "emphasised by a lack of politeness (*un manque de formes*), which has hitherto been avoided in international relations." While M. Bailby wrote: "Whether he acted through indifference or through calculation, Mr. Lloyd George will not be astonished that, having had the honour to have as his guests in London the representatives of three great Allied Powers, the fact that he should leave them while he tranquilly goes to pass a week-end at Chequers should be treated as an 'inconvenience.' But why should we be astonished by such a lack of politeness? The British Prime Minister does not even take the trouble to hide his feelings. Is it not generally known that he expresses before his intimates an aversion which he has for the representative of France, because the latter seems to wish to oppose him?"

The general opinion amongst Frenchmen of moderate views is fairly expressed in a letter which I received at this time from a member of the diplomatic service, who was not himself at the Conference. The last line, which alone refers to this matter, is definitive in its brevity: "La Conference passe par des soubresauts inquiétants. Que va-t-il se passer? Je crois encore à un de ces habituels compromis qui ne solutionnent

rien et préparent la voie à des malentendus toujours plus gros. L.G. est décidément un homme mal élevé.”

It must be remembered that in these matters the French give that measure of politeness which they themselves expect to receive. It is impossible to imagine M. Briand (and I purposely mention that least ceremonious of men) asking Mr. Lloyd George to come to Paris and then leaving him there alone while he spent his Sunday in fishing—which has always been Briand’s favourite amusement; it was only on one fatal occasion at Cannes that he indulged in a round of golf. While, unlike M. Poincaré, Mr. Lloyd George, who always expects great consideration, would not have concealed his indignation had he been treated in that cavalier fashion.

No other English politician—Mr. Asquith or Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Lord Robert Cecil or Mr. Clynes—would have acted in that way. Moreover, the offence was aggravated by the fact that on Saturday, while M. Poincaré, M. Schanzer, and M. Theunis were struggling to find a solution of problems affecting Europe, Mr. Lloyd George, according to the announcement in a friendly newspaper, passed his time in arranging a contract for the sale of a book recounting his story of the war. It is difficult to imagine a more glaring lack of *savoir-faire*. Apparently Mr. Lloyd George felt that he was in the wrong, for, upon his return on Monday, he went out of his way to protest that he had told M. Poincaré he was going to the country to golf, and that the latter had made no objection. He did not seem to realise (though, unfortunately, others did) that that was only

an explanation of how he had gone away, and not a justification of his having done so.

His other excuse—that the country was opposed to political work being advanced on a Sunday—was so puerile that, though accepted with becoming gravity at the time, it was later the subject of much bitter mirth. All the members of the Allied delegations were not ignorant of the customs of English life and the trend of public opinion. They knew perfectly well that those who advocate a more or less strict degree of Sunday observance would not view conversations on affairs of urgent and world-wide importance with any more disfavour than a game of golf.

After this incident it would have been elementary prudence (not to mention civility) to have observed carefully the usual courtesies in his treatment of M. Poincaré. But Mr. Lloyd George was consistent to the last. Instead of going to the station to say farewell to the French Prime Minister, he delegated that duty to an official representative—a proceeding which he would greatly have resented had it been practised on himself in similar circumstances.

It may be said that these are small matters. In themselves they are—trivial. But nothing is of little account that breeds unnecessary irritation. Naturally, we would take exception to rudeness shown to a British Prime Minister abroad. But we forfeit that right if foreign statesmen are discourteously treated while within our gates; and that M. Poincaré did not receive the politeness which is usual (and in respects other than to those to which I have alluded) is well within the knowledge of those who took part in the Conference.

If this arose from Mr. Lloyd George's ingrained dislike for M. Poincaré, it was unpardonable. If it was due simply to lack of knowledge or consideration, it leads to the reflection that some training in diplomatic usages still possesses practical advantages.

But how does the London Conference show that the new "diplomacy by conference," as Sir Maurice Hankey calls it, excels the older method of diplomatic negotiations? Does it not rather prove that, as the late M. Deschanel pointed out, there was a certain advantage when proposals and counter-proposals were transmitted through prescribed channels, and considered, without heated discussion, by a Minister for Foreign Affairs? Does it not show the danger of the troubles which might arise from the impatience, anger, or ill-considered words of ardent men discussing across a table and deciding between breakfast and dinner?

A Frenchman recently wrote about these successive conferences: "These reunions of statesmen destined, in appearance, to conciliation, are really nothing else than pretexts for private battles. The attitude of Mr. Lloyd George, which France, wanting only the recognition of her rights, finds it hard to explain, appears in its true light; his words of intimidation, his declarations of friendship, followed immediately by some hostile step, his flirtations with those who were yesterday our common enemies, all that constitutes the *modalités diverses* of the struggle for supremacy which the British Prime Minister energetically carries on under the mask of a peacemaker."

Without fully agreeing with the latter part of this statement, it may be admitted that though Mr. Lloyd

George was fairly often successful in getting his own way, "diplomacy by conference," carried on by one having his temperament was not likely either to make or to keep friends for us amongst the nations.

CHAPTER X

MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S DECLINE

THE two most portentous political events since the Armistice was signed took place in one and the same month : the ejection from office of Mr. Lloyd George and the seizure of power in Italy by Signor Mussolini and the Fascisti. Great as is the significance of the latter transition, it is the former which will have the more widespread and the more immediate effect upon the European situation. In the person of Mr. Lloyd George went the last of the Three who made the Treaty of Versailles. Clémenceau disappeared from the scene a few months after the Treaty was signed. Woodrow Wilson lingered longer in office, but even before Clémenceau's resignation he had seen his policy repudiated, and he himself had been stricken. For the remainder of his term in office he was a shadow in the White House.

It was only after he became the sole survivor of the Three that Mr. Lloyd George attained the plenitude of his authority and the fulness of his influence. It is no exaggeration to say that Europe hung on his words. His speeches had their repercussion on the internal politics of other countries—as more than one French Prime Minister knew to his cost. It was thought that he would give a lead towards recon-

struction and rehabilitation, and the great majority in an exhausted and discouraged continent, which only asked for a strong leader, was quite content to follow him. But as time passed it became evident that not only did he have no policy, but that he lacked the kind of mentality which might possibly conceive one; and that, in any event, he was temperamentally incapable of cleaving, through good days and bad, to one line of conduct.

The prince of opportunists, he demanded quick results. Between 1920 and 1922 there were five Prime Ministers in France, but they all said the same thing, while during the same period Mr. Lloyd George made more than twenty irreconcilable pronouncements. Macaulay has said that the younger Pitt was a great Minister when the country was at peace, but an utter failure in war-time. It is not depreciating Mr. Lloyd George's eminent and memorable services to the State to pass upon him a somewhat similar judgment. More than any other politician in this country he can claim to have won the war. But the one point of agreement between those who attack him for having made the Treaty of Versailles and those who blame him for impeding its execution is that since 1919 he has had no definite policy. Undoubtedly the problems by which he was confronted were many and intricate. But Mr. Lloyd George's crying fault was not that he did not immediately solve these puzzles: it was that he never made any sustained effort to do so, and that for three years he used the extraordinary powers which he arrogated to himself in a way which can only be described as personal.

Mr. Lloyd George continued to hold office after the war mainly because the strongest party in the State was in search of a leader. To-day he is a leader in search of a party. His fall from power is directly traceable to his lack of any foreign policy. No recapitulation of the enormous services which Mr. Lloyd George rendered during the war, and still less any false appeals to popular passions, and complaints about the hostility of "Belgravia and Mayfair" (such as he made during the recent campaign), can conceal the truth of that statement.

All great Foreign Ministers have been distinguished by their gift of patience. Talleyrand and Palmerston, to name only two, had little in common. But the success of each was largely due to the possession of that quality. The course of foreign affairs is necessarily slow and tortuous, the pitfalls many and unexpected, and it is only by patient and tenacious adherence to some fixed principles that any real progress is made. "*Les combinaisons lentes et sinueuses qui constituent ce qu'on appelle la politique extérieure.*" It is a source of strength to a country to have a firm and certain foreign policy upon which others know that they can rely for weal or woe. Any other course is the sure road to disaster. The illustrations of this statement are abundant. One will suffice. Louis Philippe came to grief and ruined the House of Orleans for ever because he betrayed one friendly nation without having another ready to take its place. He lost the support of England by his trickery about the Spanish marriages; and within a year he was an exile—in England.

But a certain fixity of purpose has always made

for the greatness of the English race. For although we have generally been accused of having more than a fair share of egotism, and often of being grasping, there has never been any secret about the path we were pursuing. Other governments might change, temporary discouragement or a somewhat Latin desire for speedy success might lead them to swerve here and there in search of the line of least resistance, but it was always recognised that neither obstacles nor delays would suffice to deflect British policy or sensibly to alter the course of British statesmen. It is not an exaggeration to say that no other country inspired the same degree of confidence in its steadfastness. For many generations Europe has reckoned with the fact that England was a good friend and a bad foe. That reputation has more than once stood us in good stead.

It is manifest that if continuity of action is an essential, Mr. Lloyd George has neither the character nor the training necessary for the safe and successful conduct of foreign affairs. In time of war even his opportunism, backed by his energy and his momentary enthusiasm, was often a great asset. But later it was a heavy handicap to us in our relations with other nations. He was never able for six successive months to present to an expectant Continent any constant policy. During the General Election of 1918 he proclaimed that Germany was to pay the utmost farthing, after the ex-Kaiser had been duly tried. His colleagues believed and followed him. To-day I find it hard to realise that a Cabinet Minister has seriously discussed with me exactly where in

London the trial might be held, regretting that Westminster Hall was then being repaired.

Since then Mr. Lloyd George has sung many tunes, going from one to the other, and often returning to one which he has temporarily abandoned. He has said that France must not press Germany too hardily. He has said that Germany must pay all that is due under the Treaty. He has warned France that, if she does make Germany pay all that is due under the Treaty the Entente is in danger. He has said that France was right to provide for her own military security. He has, both in public and in private, accused France of having designs of territorial aggrandisement. He asserted that the price of salvation was an arrangement with the Soviet Government. When he found that that was impossible, he turned upon and metaphorically rent those wondering Bolshevik delegates limb from limb, promptly forgot all about Russia, and hid his failure by the discovery that a moratorium for Germany was the needed remedy.

His utterances at conferences and in public were often not in accord. Indeed, even his speeches in Parliament contradicted each other. But Mr. Lloyd George has such a record of actual achievements that it would be grossly unfair for his countrymen to attach too much importance to all his words. He inevitably reminds one of Numa Roumestan: "*Les paroles n'ont jamais qu'un sens relatif. C'est une affaire de mise au point.*"

Mr. Lloyd George's inconsistent statements were chiefly regrettable on account of the uncertainty and consequent mistrust and irritation which they produced abroad. In this country we could well

have afforded to let them pass had there been behind or beyond them any semblance of a policy or even any evolution leading to the development of a central idea; if they had either conveyed or had hidden anything except the melancholy story of fleeting and fluctuating schemes.

Moreover, in the field of foreign affairs Mr. Lloyd George had no *flair* which might have compensated for his lack of training and have counterbalanced his temperament. He has always been a notoriously bad prophet. In January, 1914, he vigorously proclaimed that it was a propitious moment for the reduction of the Navy, as no sensible person could consider a war with Germany as being within the range of possibility. In 1916 he predicted that, if only a plebiscite was granted on the question of Upper Silesia, all trouble would surely be avoided. He won his point, because he influenced President Wilson's vote, although not his opinion, by embarrassing reminders about the views the latter had previously expressed regarding the right of self-determination. But, unless he has a convenient memory, Clémenceau's forecast (which proved to be absolutely correct) must sometimes have rung in his ears during the stress of the Silesian trouble.

Again, it was Mr. Lloyd George who, after the draft of the Treaty had actually been given to the Germans, did his utmost to persuade Clémenceau and Wilson to modify its terms in several respects; not on the ground that as it stood it was unjust (in fact, he himself later specifically said in the House of Commons that it was "a just treaty"), but because he prognosticated that the Germans would

not sign it, and incidentally that he would lose votes in England. Similar examples of his lack of foresight abound.

The last, the most glaring (and for Mr. Lloyd George the most fatal) instance was the attitude he took respecting the conflict between Greece and Turkey: an attitude which was entirely in opposition both to the advice given by the War Office and to the views held by his Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Curzon.*

Even when the Angora Government sent a representative to London to discuss the situation, Mr. Lloyd George refused to receive him. A few weeks later Mr. Lloyd George was obliged to make preliminary concessions to the same Angora Government in order to induce it to attend a conference. That was a blow to our prestige, the full price of which has yet to be paid.

Even if Mr. Lloyd George had achieved success by exercising powers wider by far than those which were ever wielded by any other Prime Minister, he would still have established a dangerous precedent, as certainly all those who followed him would not have been endowed with the same genius. But, as a matter of fact, his experiment became a series of ghastly failures, and probably ended only just in time to prevent a crucial disaster. In a speech which he made some days before he was forced to resign he himself referred gleefully—in a spirit one would expect rather from a spiteful child than from a statesman—to the confusion in which anyone who followed him would find things. In that he only spoke the truth. But it was

* For the late Sir Henry Wilson's remarks on this attitude, *see* p. 48.

perhaps characteristic that he omitted to add that he himself was the person mainly responsible for the mess.

When he left office our good understanding with France was impaired, although it is significant and fortunate that our Ally always seemed able to draw a distinction between Mr. Lloyd George and the nation. Nevertheless, the French are too logical and too proud a race to be able either to comprehend or accept the method followed by Mr. Lloyd George of patronising them one day, lecturing them the next, but never at any time making his own acts accord with his promises. The most amiable view of the situation which had any wide prevalence in France is best given in the words of the immortal Dr. O'Grady :*

" Ah ! ces Anglais ! dit il . . . Une cigarette ? " . . .

" Quoi ? " dit Aurelle. " Ne trouvez-vous pas notre vieux Bramble délicieux ? "

" Oui," fit l'autre avec réticence ; " j'aimerais mieux qu'il fût moins charmant et que son pays nous traitât mieux . . . Cette politique de l'Angleterre ! . . . Ce mélange de sermons altruistes pour notre usage et d'impérialisme égoïste pour leur compte ! . . . Sont-ils sincères ? Peuvent-ils l'être ? "

" La loyauté," dit Aurelle doucement, " leur est aussi indispensable que l'air qu'ils respirent, la viande qu'ils mangent et la balle qu'ils frappent.

" Je ne demande qu'à le croire," dit Vincent bourru, " mais que ne mettent-ils leurs actes en accord avec leurs discours ! "

It may be said in passing that the last blow to any

* *Les Discours du Docteur O'Grady*, p. 225.

remnant of French belief in Mr. Lloyd George's sincerity was dealt by Mr. Fisher at the recent assembly of the League of Nations. No one has talked more in favour of disarmament, no one has been more strident in imputing militarism to France and in condemning it, than has Mr. Lloyd George. M. de Jouvenel put this to the test when, on behalf of his country, he brought forward a definite plan for the reduction of armaments.

It is, I think, very doubtful whether his scheme was practicable. But undoubtedly it opened up the whole question and gave an opportunity for counter proposals. All that Mr. Fisher (who was always rather a pathetic figure at Geneva) had to say in reply was that since England was an island she was only indirectly interested. If our geographical situation really affords us any such security in this age it is difficult to understand why, during the war, Mr. Lloyd George time and again refused the pleas of M. Clémenceau (and also, I believe, of Lord Haig) that more men should be sent to the Western Front, upon the ground that proper precautions had to be taken against the danger of an invasion. But the truth is that in war-time "England has now few of the advantages of being an island while retaining all the disadvantages, and notably that of an island which cannot feed itself." Mr. Fisher was apparently still living in the days of Macaulay, who, in describing the Dutch War of 1666, wrote: "The roar of foreign guns was heard, for the first and last time, by the citizens of London."

On the other hand, Italy had apparently decided that the only way to cope with Mr. Lloyd George was

to imitate him, and there was every indication that that country was developing a policy of opportunism. It is noteworthy that, although upon the whole her representatives sided with Mr. Lloyd George at the London Conference, when Sir John Bradbury afterwards placed before the Reparation Commission the proposals of our Government, the Italian members did not vote, which, according to the procedure which governs the Commission, counted as a negative vote. Indeed, Sir John Bradbury could not find a single supporter for his plan. It was a fair indication of how, upon the question of Reparations, Mr. Lloyd George had got us into complete disagreement with all our former Allies.

Nor did his Government enjoy any more confidence outside of Europe. The United States regarded with the greatest mistrust his personal policy, and the Harding Administration resolutely refused to have anything to do with his various Conferences. While, finally, his indiscreet call for troops when he was fulminating about a war with Turkey led our Dominions to think that we wanted to exploit them in adventures in which they could have no possible interest, and for which they certainly had no sympathy.

After Mr. Lloyd George was forced out of office he referred to the Treaty as one of the achievements which the country would put to his credit, blissfully ignoring that more than any other person he had impeded its execution. The fact that Germany was the one and only country which regretted his departure from Downing Street was pregnant with meaning.

For three years he had exercised more power, and

more uncontrolled power, than any man in England since Oliver Cromwell. But in time of peace Cromwell made England respected abroad ; Mr. Lloyd George made her suspected.

About a year ago I ventured to write : " The only safe policy for Great Britain is a strong defensive alliance. If Mr. Lloyd George impairs the understanding with France, the chances are that he is conducting his country to a fate which will obscure to posterity the great services he rendered during the war.

Opportunism may sometimes be temporarily profitable in party politics. But in the conduct of foreign affairs it can only create confusion and breed bad feeling. In that domain a settled policy is essential, and no sporadic displays of clever manipulations can inspire the same degree of confidence or ensure the same measure of security. Unfortunately, it cannot be denied that at present, instead of going towards a closer and more formal understanding with France, he is contributing to the degeneration, if not to the dissolution, of the Entente."

Mr. Lloyd George did not resign any too soon for his own fame. Had he remained longer the best his countrymen could have said of him would have been :

" Il m'a fait trop de bien pour en dire du mal ;
Il m'a fait trop de mal pour en dire du bien."

His fall marks the end of a period—one which it was thought would be fruitful in accomplishment, but which proved to be more sterile than the greatest pessimist would three years ago have dared to predict. How far circumstances and how far the actors are

responsible is an unanswerable question. Possibly the truth is that the principal players were unsuited for their rôle.

The stage upon which we have now entered is likely to be transitional. But it will begin a new era in respect to the great problems of the day, and, indirectly, may be decisive about the position which Great Britain will occupy in Europe during the next decade or more. But it is impossible to make any fair estimate about the future without fully considering the present political situation.

Mr. Lloyd George's fall is too generally attributed to the Die-hards. That very energetic group undoubtedly did its best and, in the final result, counted for something. But it did not pluck the fruit. On the contrary, the fruit was so rotten that it fell from the tree. Had it been otherwise it would never have been gathered. The Die-hards never could, and Mr. Bonar Law never would, have jumped high enough to grasp it. The lack of courage of one man and the shrewd pertinacity of another were responsible for what happened.

Someone wrote that Mr. Lloyd George was obliged to go because he had ceased to lead. It would be impossible to put the fact more exactly or more succinctly. The former Prime Minister has never been distinguished for great moral courage in the game of politics. No one can talk more bravely. But he likes to have the cards stacked; and when he is faced with a crisis, the outcome of which is uncertain, his judgment and his resolution are both impaired. Doubtless he recognises his own weakness, for he is the most cautious of men in such matters. Anyone

having the vaguest knowledge of what took place during the weeks preceding Mr. Asquith's resignation is well aware that Mr. Lloyd George was proclaiming right and left that unless his chief was ousted from office, and he took his place, the war would be lost. But he would not make any move—much less go to a Cabinet meeting and resign—unless he was assured in advance of support sufficient to turn the scales. He would take no risk.

When his leadership was suddenly threatened some months ago, he completely lost his head. He was undecided and indecisive. He would leave Downing Street to be away some days and would return in some hours. In the end his chief prop was Lord Birkenhead, who, until the last moment, was optimistic about the result of the Carlton Club meeting. I am inclined to think that possibly the outcome of the crisis might have been different had Mr. Churchill not been ill at the time—certainly there would have been a stiffer struggle.

Apart from Mr. Lloyd George himself, the person responsible for his downfall was Sir George Younger. When Younger perceived that the Conservative party would not or could not absorb Mr. Lloyd George, he determined that the latter should not swallow the Conservative party. When Mr. Lloyd George wanted a general election early in 1922, Younger defied him, and in a public speech reminded the Prime Minister that he dwelt in Downing Street by grace of Conservative support. It was then that Lord Birkenhead contemptuously referred to Sir George as "the cabin boy," which unfortunate remark must be classed with President Wilson's "too proud to fight" and Mr.

Asquith's "wait and see." During the following months, when Lord Birkenhead from time to time left the Woolsack and delighted his peers by one of those felicitous speeches, in which he excels above all others, the "cabin boy" was undermining the pillars of the Coalition.

Mr. Bonar Law's infallible common sense and his acknowledged sincerity are exactly what is needed at present, and will go far to restore confidence both at home and abroad. He will bring matters back to a more normal level. But it is possible that he may not go much further. The admission he made when he took office—that he himself did not know where we were—is perhaps ominous. Moreover, the whole position is complicated by the fact that the general election only delayed a settlement which must come. In our system we can only have two great parties. The rise of the Labour party presaged a conflict between it and the Liberal party. It was—and is—obvious that one must eventually absorb the other.

There is every reason to think that in this contest Labour will be the victor; the extreme Labour element becoming a noisy but small and uninfluential group, the more advanced Liberals giving their adhesion to moderate Labour, and the older Liberals drifting towards Conservatism. That is the natural development.

In a former work I ventured to point out that the Labour party could not attain power merely by the support of Trade Unionists; that it would be obliged to have a certain proportion of the middle-class vote, and that it had little chance of capturing that, unless it was free from any taint of

Communism—and probably unless it also abandoned its demand for nationalisation.

But the Labour party will probably never be able to carry the country on the policy put forward at the last election. From where can it expect to draw the increased voting strength which would give it a majority in support of such doctrines? Certainly not from those who have previously called themselves Conservatives. Certainly not from any large section of that middle-class vote which is now the only mainstay of Liberalism of all shades; indeed, the recent municipal elections showed clearly that that class, above all others, fears Labour's extravagance with other people's money. While as Labour, strictly so-called, is to-day organised as thoroughly as is possible (and probably more effectually than in any other country in the world), there is nothing further to be looked for in that quarter. The fact is that the Labour party, well as it did, had a chance to do better which it neglected. The Liberal party was divided. Many Liberals were discouraged. If Mr. Clynes and other leaders had had the pluck to tell their followers the truth, and to discard a policy in which, so far as one could judge, they did not fully concur, they would have made gains which would more than have compensated for the extreme Labour votes which they would have lost. Also they would have done, once and for all, what they will eventually have to do before they ever sit in Downing Street.

But though Mr. Clynes evidently had little sympathy for the programme which was imposed upon him, and Mr. J. H. Thomas said openly that the question of a capital levy would have to be dependent upon

proof that it was a businesslike measure, yet it was in support of those principles that the Labour party appealed for votes. The fact that it did so well while carrying such a handicap proves its growing strength in the country, although the result was probably due not so much to any deep belief in those theories as to a growing tendency on the part of former Liberals to desert a party which is moribund, and which does not seem to have any definite principles of any kind. The issue is hardening between Labour on one side and one less extreme party on the other.

If Labour wants a class war, there is no reason why it should not continue to demand nationalisation of industries in the terms of its recent programme, and a levy on capital. But in that struggle not only would it be the loser, but it has probably already reached its high-water mark of influence. If it wants to be firmly ensconced in office, it may just as well abandon now as later theories to which it is unlikely that it will ever convert a majority of the electorate. The most that it can hope to attain is a temporary balance of power. Many who are entirely sympathetic to the essence of the Labour movement, who look forward to and do not dread the day when the Labour party may take its turn in governing the country, hope that it may realise its error in time.

The result of the election makes more feasible a fusion of the two sections of the Liberal party. For the more Labour turns to the left, the less chance there is of any drift to it of Independent Liberals. Yet the latter must in some way strengthen their position, unless they are content to remain a highly

respectable, but entirely powerless, party—doomed to extinction. In proportion to its numbers it possesses in its ranks more men of character than any other party. Mr. Asquith and Lord Grey are only the first names on a fairly long list. It is probable that many who were Coalition Liberals will now become Liberals pure and simple, and will gradually and naturally revert to their former allegiance.

The question of Mr. Lloyd George, however, is somewhat more difficult. Mr. Asquith would never oppose any reasonable arrangement. He, more than any other man, has cause to be vindictive about Mr. Lloyd George; but to Mr. Asquith petty feelings have always been unknown. There is, however, a certain element which is not anxious to welcome Mr. Lloyd George back to the fold. It thinks that the dynamic force which, within six years, disrupted one party and all but disrupted another, would at best be a dangerous acquisition. Moreover, the former Prime Minister has not strengthened himself—has, indeed, lessened his own value, by the course he pursued in the campaign. He began on the wrong note. Having been obliged to resign because the majority of the Conservative party was no longer in accord with him, he told the country that his sword was unsheathed. It was not at first apparent why, or upon whose behalf. But Mr. Lloyd George had not spoken long before he made it clear that he was fighting for himself, that he wanted to wage a personal war upon those who had had the audacity to disagree with him and to take his place, and that he was asking for volunteers in that crusade. Not many were forthcoming.

Nor did his attempt to pander to popular passions,

his plea that he was fighting for the people against a class which oppressed them, meet with any success. On the part of Mr. Lloyd George it was a natural reversion to type. But it showed a singular misconception of the situation ; a failure to realise that many things have changed since he took up his abode in Downing Street. For the Labour party has for all time destroyed the picture of Mr. Lloyd George as the champion of the masses, and has thus completely drawn his fangs as a demagogue.

Nearly all of Mr. Lloyd George's speeches lacked dignity, while they abounded in praise of himself and in depreciation of his opponents. His boast that he put country before party evoked no enthusiasm, and even rang false, for it was notorious that he had practically no party, and that he was trying to create one. Upon the whole, it was a lamentable spectacle, which aroused some ridicule in other countries and more regret in England. It is melancholy to reflect that a man whose talents had allowed him in critical days to rise to heights of achievement beyond the range of any of his contemporaries should sink to such methods. Neither Lord Grey nor Mr. Asquith could have accomplished what Mr. Lloyd George did during the war. But can anyone imagine loss of office causing either of those statesmen to parade the country, belauding themselves, belittling the abilities of their successors, and in every way disclosing personal spite and bitterness? However, Mr. Lloyd George was always a bad loser.

Nevertheless, although the wily Welshman has been signally defeated by the shrewd Scot (mainly because Younger steadily pursued his path and always kept

his head, while Mr. Lloyd George did not, and could not, do either one or the other), the fact remains that the former Prime Minister is still the greatest political figure of the day. It is more likely than not that the future holds something in store for him. Predictions about that would be futile. But one may reasonably speculate upon what is going to happen during the next few months. Unless Mr. Lloyd George temporarily withdraws from any active participation in public life, he may perchance for a short period be a wanderer in the wilderness, with a little (although dwindling) band of pilgrims, notably Mr. Winston Churchill and Lord Birkenhead.

Possibly Mr. Lloyd George may spend some time in retirement while writing his war book. That project deserves more than a passing notice. Not only is it an absolutely new departure for a Prime Minister (and Mr. Lloyd George was still in office when the coming publication of the book was announced), but, as is well known, his Privy Councillor's oath debars him from revealing anything which has taken place at a Council meeting. How can Mr. Lloyd George divide his mind into watertight compartments, so that L. G. the author shall be ignorant of what came to the knowledge of the Right Hon. David Lloyd George as a member of His Majesty's Privy Council? For many people that would be a difficult problem, but Mr. Lloyd George has solved others equally abstruse—in a way which was satisfactory, at least to himself.*

* Since the above was written, I have read the advance sheets of Mr. Winston Churchill's forthcoming book (which is first to be published in the *Times*) and admired the manner in which he has told his interesting story without, upon the whole, infringing upon his Privy Councillor's oath.

Still more curious was the semi-official statement. It said: "We understand that the Prime Minister's decision for early publication is due to the fact that there has been during recent months a succession of war books in which, with often a scanty foundation of actual knowledge, his policy and actions have been sharply and even acrimoniously criticised, and he has felt that in the interests of historical accuracy, as well as in justice to himself, he should submit the true facts to the judgment of the people without further delay. Otherwise he would have delayed the writing of his book to the days of his retirement, which was his original intention."

If the then Prime Minister thought that historical accuracy was involved—if it was of national importance that the world should be enlightened on certain points—he might have made a speech, or even have issued a Blue Book, which the public could have obtained without paying publisher's profits. But when Mr. Lloyd George refers to getting justice for himself (what practical politician expects that?), one can only compare his attitude with that of M. Clémenceau. I quote from Colonel Repington's *After the War Diary*:

"'No,' said C., 'he had said nothing, had written nothing, and was not going to. He took no interest in controversies about the past, which was over. He had lived through the greatest period and had done his best. It was enough to contemplate in silence the grandeur of it all. He took pleasure in his disdain of all discussion over the past. He had been too deeply concerned in these events, and the events had been too tremendous for him not to feel it unworthy of him

to waste his remaining years in sterile discussions. He did not care what people thought or said. It was all one to him.

“ ‘ He had succeeded and all those who had failed owed him a grudge for succeeding. Yes, he could destroy many reputations by a word. But that was no service to France. If he said what he thought of X, he would make bad feeling between England and France, and that was of no service to either. Let them talk. He knew that he was credited with a bad character because he spoke the truth, but that was the way of the world and he did not care. He admitted the high cost of the mistakes of the war, but was not going to change his point of view. He thought it would be mean, petty, and dishonouring to such a great epoch if he began to say or to write that on such and such a date someone or other said, or wrote, or did something or other. It was not for him to defend himself. He regarded such littleness with scorn, and preferred silence and his own contemplation of great grandeurs.’ ”

It seems more likely than not that “ X ” is Mr. Lloyd George. M. Clémenceau has for half a century been one of the most pungent political writers in France. On that ground Mr. Lloyd George is no match for him ; and while “ The Tiger ” has no wish to glorify himself, he is unlikely to allow Mr. Lloyd George to go unchallenged, if the latter gives any interpretation of vital facts from which he dissents. Considering how much they disagreed in the past, and how differently they look at things in the present, it would seem that Mr. Lloyd George will be taking his life in his hands when he gives his version of the

momentous events in which they have played the leading rôles.*

Mr. Winston Churchill will always be a formidable adversary to any government he opposes, and his defeat at Dundee must be a relief to Mr. Bonar Law. It also solves the problem of Mr. Churchill's immediate future. He will probably have some difficulty in finding another seat. For although his reputation in the House of Commons is deservedly high (he is a really great Parliamentarian), he is profoundly distrusted throughout the country. However, he is unlikely to submit without a struggle to any long exile from Westminster. Despite his many interests, he lives only for politics.

The position of his co-adventurer, Lord Birkenhead, is more awkward. Even a bargain between the so-called National Liberals and Mr. Asquith would not solve the problem for former "Gallop Smith," once the rising hope of the Tory party.

There is a curious parallel between the careers of Lord Birkenhead and Sir John Simon. Neither had any fortune nor any family influence. They went up to Oxford at the same time and happened to go to the same college, Wadham. Both were Presidents of the Union. Both were called to the Bar, took silk about the same time, obtained a substantial practice long before any others of their generation, and became Law Officers of the Crown at an early age. There the similarity ends.

But in respect to versatility there is a certain

* It was at first announced that Mr. Lloyd George intended to devote the proceeds from the sales of his Memoirs to charity. But his decision, after leaving Office, to add to his income by writing newspaper articles led to the cancellation of his contract with the publishers.

resemblance between Lord Birkenhead and the great Lord Brougham. It is to be hoped that the former will not share Brougham's fate; for having once been Lord Chancellor (in Lord Grey's Ministry), he was ever afterwards excluded from office—by his former colleagues. On one occasion the Great Seal was put in commission, because it was felt that if it was given to anyone it would have to be to Brougham.

Lord Birkenhead made himself conspicuous before the general election by ridiculing the capacities of the members of Mr. Bonar Law's Cabinet. According to the former Lord Chancellor, they were not so clever as their predecessors.

Probably he was right. But he might have remembered the remark attributed to Queen Victoria, when, after the fall of the brilliant, but far from pleasant, Lord Westbury, she handed the Great Seal to Lord Cranworth, a lawyer of decidedly mediocre ability, who was chiefly known as a Sunday-school teacher: "Now you see, Lord Cranworth, how much better it is to be good than to be clever." For politicians are judged not so much by their mental calibre as by what they accomplish. The nation was not entirely satisfied with what was achieved by Mr. Lloyd George's galaxy of talent. In any event, before passing final judgment, it might be better to give their successors an opportunity to show what they can do. While perhaps Lord Birkenhead would best exemplify Mr. Lloyd George's declaration that he and his followers were putting country before party, if he showed that they also put country before self; if he gave Mr. Bonar Law's Cabinet a fair chance, and even helped it with the cleverness he thinks it lacks,

and of which, as is universally admitted, he possesses much more than an average share.

Lord Birkenhead stands in a class by himself. He made his name in a day by a remarkable, if impudent, speech in the House of Commons. His frank consciousness of his own abilities is sometimes amusing but never offensive. As Lord Chancellor he was an unqualified success. The duties of that office are manifold, and usually its holder excels in the performance of one more than the others. But it would be difficult to say whether Lord Birkenhead was at his best when sitting as a judge or when presiding over the House of Lords, or when he left the Woolsack to take part in a debate. The brilliancy of his many parts rather obscures their depth; and perhaps the very qualities which contributed most to his early success are now sometimes a handicap. But he is one of those (and their number is limited) whom it would be impossible to replace. His present position is undoubtedly embarrassing, but the loss will not be his alone if he does not get some scope for his political activity.

The passage of time will dim the remembrance of Mr. Lloyd George's abject failure in his attempt to make himself a dictator in foreign affairs. Probably the soundest judgment is that neither his character, temperament, nor training fitted him to cope with the situation. Mr. Asquith, who, with all his great qualities, also has his limitations, suffered in precisely the same way when, in 1916, those limitations were placed under a fiercer searchlight than politicians are usually called upon to face in the course of their career. Macaulay wrote: "Of almost every man

who has been distinguished in the political world it may be said that the course he pursued, and the effect which he produced, depended less upon his personal qualities than on the circumstances in which he was placed." That remark (the truth of which Mr. Lloyd George has illustrated, both in his success and in his subsequent failure) shows why the country needs a change from time to time—*pace* Lord Birkenhead ; and why Mr. Bonar Law is the logical person to guide its destinies to-day. For it is only by a policy of uniform prudence and consistency, one which will inspire our adversaries with respect and our Allies with confidence in our firmness, that we can emerge from the present maze.

CHAPTER XI

REPARATIONS

THE Reparations question is the greatest problem of to-day, for upon its settlement depends the permanent recovery of European finances. It is possible that it will never be solved unless the United States takes the lead. But whether the tangle has to be unravelled by Europe unaided, or whether some assistance from the United States may be obtained at a later stage, it is obvious that the first steps must be taken by the Allies. Both the American Government and the American people have made it perfectly clear that no assistance can be expected from them unless and until some order is brought out of the existing chaos. They blame both the Allies and Germany for grave errors of commission and omission since 1919.

A new period began with the advent of the present Government. The Prime Minister stated during the general election that "our relationship with France is the keynote, must be the keynote, of our foreign policy." From Mr. Bonar Law words mean something. A fair interpretation of that statement of policy is not that he will necessarily agree to any course which France demands, but that he will always seek an agreement with the French Government before

committing this country either by speeches or by direct or indirect and undisclosed communications with Berlin.

This is a notable departure from the path pursued by Mr. Lloyd George, and one which will be welcomed alike in this country and abroad. Mr. Bonar Law realises that our Ally cannot be left in the same position as she was after another Treaty of Versailles—that of 1783—when, in the words of Michelet, “France garda la gloire, et la ruine.”

Any consideration of the Reparation question resolves itself into three main questions:

- (1) Does Germany want to pay?
- (2) Can Germany pay?
- (3) Is Germany trying to pay?

The answer to the first query is simple. No country ever wants to liquidate a war debt, except as a matter of convenience. It is not a liability for which individuals feel any personal responsibility. Therefore the only incentive to pay is that it is the best policy to do so in order to obtain relief from an uncomfortable or unprofitable situation.

In Germany there are many people (perhaps more than is generally thought) who hold the view that the country should do her utmost to pay. But there are others wielding influence (and notably that arch-profitier, Hugo Stinnes) who do not want to pay and think that payment may be avoided. This group is supported by the conduct of certain politicians amongst the Allies who, from time to time, seem to extend hope that the burden will be alleviated. Naturally, every

glimmering expectation of that nature paralyses those who preach the doctrine of payment, and increases the power of the somewhat sinister Stinnes. For it is always easier to make people think that they will not have to pay than to galvanise them into meeting obligations for which they do not feel entirely liable.

Of these politicians the worst offender is Mr. Lloyd George. If the bill for his mercurial moods could be assessed it would come to a pretty penny. For the late Prime Minister is not even of that stern but always consistent school, of which the oracle is the *Manchester Guardian*, and which would, more or less, let Germany go scot free. He is no believer in Napoleon's maxim that policy should govern incident, and not incident policy. Indeed, he is the greatest and most successful exponent of the latter theory. But though, like Bismarck, he was the instrument by which his country won a great war, he failed to show that he was Bismarck's equal in securing to his country the economic value of its victory.

The vast majority of Germans, from Cabinet Ministers to the man-in-the-street, profess to believe that their country was no more responsible for the war than were the Allies. The extremists go further and allege that France alone was to blame for starting the world conflict. They point to M. Poincaré as the principal criminal, thus showing a peculiar ignorance of the powers of the President of the French Republic in general, and a convenient forgetfulness about the particular part played by M. Poincaré in July, 1914.

Undoubtedly many sincerely think that their country was no more guilty than France or England. They

have had no opportunity to study the evidence, and are content to accept the verdict of those set in authority over them. The latter know better. Nevertheless, they continue to make declarations of innocence because they believe it to be good policy. For the prevalent opinion throughout the country is that recognition of that claim by the Allies and by the world at large would lead to a revision of the Treaty of Versailles. No one who has not spent some time in Germany can have any conception of how ingrained is that idea.

I see in my diary the record of a conversation with two high officials of the Wilhelmstrasse with whom I lunched in Berlin some months ago. These men were not bureaucrats, nor were they lacking in knowledge of the world. They had passed years in various German Embassies abroad. But when I referred to the sums spent (officially or otherwise) in supporting organisations whose sole object is to prove that Germany is a guiltless victim, they eagerly assured me that they believed that to be the surest road to a modification of the Treaty. The faith with which all cling to this hope is as pathetic as it is characteristic. It illustrates once again the truth of Madame de Staël's remark about the Prussians, "*Ils savent tout et ils ne comprennent rien.*" For neither the declarations of each successive Chancellor, nor the most vigorous propaganda, nor the efforts of more or less subsidised organisations (there are said to be over forty societies formed in Germany for this very purpose),*

* There are also a number of similar organisations in other countries, all with prejudiced German proclivities. A fair example is "The Scientific Commission for Investigating the Causes of the World War." At its first meeting, held at Christiania, those self-appointed judges

will change the judgment of the world. The verdict has been pronounced, and the only appeal is to a posterity which will be little concerned with reparations; though, after all, "*La postérité n'est impartiale que si elle est indifférente.*"

Everything would have been simplified had the Allies adopted the rule which Germany applied to others, and therefore would doubtless have understood herself. It would not have been necessary to take the whole Prussian creed, for the civilised world has never assented to what Bismarck told Count Beust—that it was the duty of a victorious nation to crush its enemy while it had the chance. But after 1870 the French admitted the principle that the victors had the right to exact the expenses of the war and also a proportionate compensation for damage. That was the basis of the Treaty of Frankfurt. The application of that formula would have left those Germans who are sincere in fancying that their country is not responsible for the war with their belief intact. While even the Wilhelmstrasse would then have realised that it was a waste of time to argue about that question.

But the most futile of the many pleas of this nature is that Germany was forced to sign the Treaty of Versailles, and did not do so of her own free will. For what Treaty after any war is anything but the final act of sealing the triumph of the more powerful over the weaker? If Germany had won and exacted those territorial cessions which were her aim (and of which even the late Herr Erzberger was once the avowed

from Sweden, Norway, and Holland solemnly pronounced that "the most prominent citizens of the majority of the belligerent countries have expressed the wish for such an investigation." The most extraordinary thing is that the German Press takes such doings seriously.

advocate), the Allies would have signed in the same way—not because they wanted to do so, but because they would have had no choice. The day when the conqueror will make terms to suit the vanquished on the ground that the latter was right will never dawn. For obviously there will be no further war if right is ever accepted by all in lieu of might.

A personage whose official position in Great Britain as well as his technical knowledge give him a grasp of this whole situation which I cannot pretend to have wrote to me, deprecating the conclusions, which I placed on record in a former book, on the ground that I apparently did not realise that it was even in the interest of France that Germany should be given time to recuperate. The necessity of a moratorium is necessarily governed by the capacity of Germany to pay. Admittedly, blood cannot be extracted from a stone. If circumstances actually impose a moratorium there is nothing to discuss. But, until the recent *débâcle* of the mark, the main argument of the advocates of that measure was that Germany could pay afterwards. That presupposed an intention and a desire on the part of Germany to meet her debt.

I was unable to find any general sentiment of that nature a year ago ; while six months later it seemed that the idea that payment could and would be eluded had considerably hardened. I see no reason to cast any blame on the German people for their attitude. They are simply following the lead which their rulers have given them—though I make certain reservations in respect to the sincerity of Dr. Wirth, who was put in a difficult position at a difficult moment. But if those in power had spent the time lost in trying to

prove Germany's innocence (and even Dr. Wirth made an unsuccessful foray into that field), in showing the world her good faith, and in preaching and practising to their fellow-citizens duties of economy towards that end, a part of the Reparation Bill would have been settled to-day. Nor is the course which has been pursued by the Allied Governments impeccable. More often than not they have approached the matter from the wrong angle. The Treaty of Versailles cast certain burdens upon Germany. It would have been better had more resoluton been shown in directing that country's attention to her present obligations, and less time wasted in attempting to delve too far into the future.

(2) Can Germany pay?

That is a more intricate question: and is not disposed of by letters to the *Times* jauntily pointing out where and how the necessary money can be found and extracted.

My own belief, after some study and examination of the question, both in Germany and elsewhere, is that if the amount for pensions were eliminated, she can pay—in time; and possibly in some respects otherwise than is precisely stipulated by the Treaty.* I am inclined to think that M. Loucheur and the late Herr Walther Rathenau were on the right path at Wiesbaden. But this view is put forward without any suggestion that it is of great value. For experience has shown that even those who (unlike myself) have all possible qualifications for judging, are far from being

* I am not here concerned to answer the contention of those who say that even if Germany could pay (which chiefly means pay France and Belgium), it would injure British trade,

infallible. The greatest financier is not always a reliable prophet, once he gets out of the comparatively small field in which he lives and moves and has his being ; while it is worth while noting that (as he has frankly admitted in his more recent publication) the terrifying disasters which, in 1919, Mr. Keynes predicted in his famous book, *Economic Consequences of the Peace*, have not yet come to pass. Yet Mr. Keynes would be unlikely to miss any point he could make, since both at the Peace Conference and afterwards he has ever been the firm friend of Germany and the bitter opponent of France.

While Sir Eric Geddes, speaking at Cambridge in 1918, said, "We will get out of Germany all you can squeeze out of a lemon and a bit more. I will squeeze her until you can hear her pips squeak," apparently decided later that that was either an impossible or an inadvisable operation. For in October, 1922, the same Sir Eric Geddes said, "It is useless to pursue a shadow. You will not be able to obtain reparations from Germany either in money or in merchandise. She has no money ; and if you take her merchandise the consequence will be lack of employment."*

Even Jove nods sometimes.

The weakest point in the Reparations Bill, and the one of which the justice is doubtful, is the amount inscribed for pensions. Whether or not it is well founded is a matter which I do not propose to discuss

* The clearest exposition of the theory that Germany is and will be unable to pay any large amount was made by Mr. McKenna in his admirably lucid address at "The American Bankers' Association Convention," held in New York, October 5th, 1922. But, on the other hand, Sir Robert Horne, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, stated that, after the fullest examination, he was convinced that Germany could pay very considerable sums,

in detail. But certainly the line of reasoning which led to its inclusion was sophisticated to the point of being objectionable. The primary argument against the pensions claim was that it was not covered by President Wilson's declaration respecting the basis of any peace. While using the phrase, "No war contributions and no penalties," he had added that Germany must pay for the restoration of the regions she had invaded and laid waste in various countries. The Allies later accepted this with the limitation that the word "restoration" should include all damages caused to civilians or to their property by German attacks on land or sea or from the air. It is, perhaps, not surprising that President Wilson should have found it somewhat difficult to conceive how pensions fell under his declaration, even when read with this reservation. But what is still more surprising is the contention which finally convinced him that they did, namely, that every soldier became a civilian at the expiration of his term of service, and that consequently a wound from which he still suffered after leaving the army was damage caused to a civilian. One does not know whether to marvel more at the ingenuity of the reasoning, or the facility with which Mr. Wilson adopted it.

I do not go so far as to say that the inclusion of pensions was unjustifiable. But if it was, the decision should have been taken irrespective of Mr. Wilson's famous declaration. Should the Allies have been actually tied to the words of Wilson's declaration? That is a question which has given rise to interminable debates. But as the hypocrisy of the Peace Conference peels off, one sees that, in practice, the Allies

felt themselves bound only so far as was necessary to keep the somewhat obstinate Wilson in line ; and that they sincerely did not regard themselves as bound *vis-à-vis* Germany. Their sincerity was greater than their courage. For once I find myself in accord with Mr. Keynes, in thinking that the expedient adopted was equally illogical and ignominious.

A financial authority whose words carry weight, the Hon. R. H. Brand—in a letter to the *Times* of August 19th, 1922—advised the cancellation of the British Reparation claims and the debt from France, always provided that the whole Reparation question might thereby be speedily settled ; and he added : “ We should be the more willing to abandon any Reparation claims because, as I believe, we never had any right to include the payment of pensions, which accounts for just about two-thirds of our whole claim. We could not, of course, speak for the Dominions.”

If we have no right to payment for pensions, neither have our Allies. Such a reduction would put the whole matter upon a different basis.

But who first insisted upon pensions being added to the account ? Nine out of ten people would probably say that it was M. Clémenceau. But, as one of the American experts (Mr. Bernard Baruch) has disclosed, it was Mr. Lloyd George. He thereby did France a notably bad service. For if (as Mr. Brand says) the figure for pensions is about two-thirds of the whole British claims, it is certainly not so high a proportion of the French claim ; and, therefore, had pensions not been included, an equitable division of anything recovered from Germany would have given France a larger percentage than does the present

arrangement : 52 per cent. to France and 22 per cent. to Great Britain.

In any event, neither the Allies nor Germany herself know to-day the latter's capacity. That is a question which only the future can determine. Each is wasting time in trying to convince the other that its answer is the correct solution of the riddle. The one thing certain is that Germany cannot pay, will not be able to pay, unless she tries to do so. The practical as distinguished from the theoretical question—the one which can be decided now because the evidence is at hand—is :

(3) Is Germany trying to pay ?

At the outset it is only fair to say that Dr. Wirth made an honest attempt to keep the pledges he gave. Even M. Briand testified at Washington to his belief in the Chancellor's sincerity. But he was hampered, on one side, by the great industrialists, who are striving to have the reparation claims evaded, who would like to get subsidies for their various industries, and who, anyway, do not intend to bear their full part in meeting payments ; and, on the other side, by the demands of the Socialist supporters of a republican government that the state should take the money of the rich in order to better the living conditions of the poor.

But after due allowance has been made for the difficulties by which Dr. Wirth was faced, it is still necessary to examine whether what was accomplished up to the end of last year shows that the country was trying to meet her war debt.

It is, however, necessary to draw a dividing line between a period ending at about May, 1922. Up

to that time it is possible that the German Government might have kept control of the situation. It is true that it was not originally responsible for the fall of the mark. But it is equally true that it sometimes encouraged the movement, and, above all, took no steps to check it, until it was too late. To-day the German Government is powerless to do anything effective except with the assistance of other countries—assistance which can hardly be extended unless the Allies take complete control of the whole German financial system.

The total payments, up to September 1st, 1921 (including those in kind) amounted to something less than 3 milliards 800 million gold marks. But as that did not even cover the cost of the Rhine occupation, which is a first charge, France has received nothing whatever by way of reparations, and is even at a loss when her own disbursements for Germany are taken into account.

Could Germany have done more ?

It is significant of the whole attitude of the Government that it has let some of the means of payment pass out of its control and has been prodigal in its expenditure of others.

During the war great care was taken that capital should not be sent out of the country. In December, 1918, when the Armistice was renewed for the first time, the Government undertook that (unless by prior agreement with the Allies) it would not allow any moneys or securities, belonging either to individuals or to companies, to leave Germany. Until the end of 1921 this promise was almost entirely ignored. The Stinnes interests may possibly be the greatest offenders :

but they are only one amongst many. The primary fault lies with Berlin, which has made no serious attempt to enforce obedience to the law. But the Allied Governments are not free from blame. The letter sent by the Reparation Commission to Dr. Wirth on December 2nd, 1921, stated that it was known that large sums had been placed abroad. Why, then, if they were so well aware of the fact, did not the Allies exercise the powers contained in the Treaty?

Still more indicative is the fact that since 1918 no effort has been made to establish a sound financial basis, always excepting the period when Erzberger was Minister of Finance. The budgets have been derisory. In 1919 the deficit was 49 milliards of marks, of which 7 milliards was on the ordinary budget. In 1920 it was 62 milliards, 10 being on the ordinary budget. For 1921 the deficit exceeded 160 milliards. In the face of such figures one naturally inquires what was done with the money which did come into the Treasury. It will be found that the Government reduced the hours of work and augmented the number of employees, one measure doubtless entailing the other. In a period of three years the number of functionaries of the Reich increased by more than 45 per cent.* On the railways there were 740,000 in 1913, and 1,044,000 in 1920. The rates have been raised from time to time, but have not kept pace with the depreciation of the mark. The Minister of Finance recognised this last year when he told the Reichstag that if the tariffs corresponded to the

* This calculation makes full allowance for the number formerly employed by the different states, and who are now employed by the Reich.

fallen value of the mark, the coffers would be bursting with money and the railways would be the pillar of the finances of the state. Instead, they showed in 1920 a deficit of 14 milliards of marks, and a still greater one for 1921.

The loss on the postal, telegraph and telephone services was 3 milliard of marks, of which more than 2 milliards were spent on new work and improvements. In 1921 the food subsidies amounted to 22 milliard 500 million paper marks, while 9 milliards were spent in building houses for workmen.

In considering the latter sums it must be remembered that a Government largely dependent upon the support of Socialists is committed to measures of that nature, irrespective of their financial advisability. Nevertheless, upon the whole, it may fairly be said that there has been no sign of any voluntary endeavour to preach or to practice thrift. Indeed, the deliberate policy of spending so as to make a bad showing has had its evil effects upon all administrations. For instance, the municipal budget of Berlin is in a lamentable condition.

So much for expenditure. The question respecting sufficiency of taxation is still more complicated.

The indirect taxation in force during 1921 included taxes on tobacco, matches and playing-cards, which have from time to time been increased. There was also a tax of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the business turnover, and of 15 per cent. upon certain articles of luxury.

The income-tax, according to the law of March 29th, 1920, varied from 10 to 60 per cent., the exemption base being 1,500 marks. One-third of this revenue went to the Reich, and two-thirds to the various states

and communes. The tax upon the profits of companies was regulated in accordance with the dividends paid, and there was a uniform 10 per cent. tax upon the sale of any capital.

Succession taxes comprised: (1) a tax of from 1 to 5 per cent. on the total succession before any division; (2) a tax of 7 to 70 per cent. upon inheritances, according to the degree of relationship and the amount involved; and (3) a super tax, which fell upon heirs whose own fortune exceeded a certain figure. These three taxes could possibly amount to 90 per cent.

In addition, there was a war tax upon increased capitals—amounts of less than 10,000 marks being exempted. The initial tax was 10 per cent., and it grew as high as 100 per cent.

Finally, there was a capital tax called *Reichsnotopfer*—"Sacrifice for the distress of the Empire." This tax, which was based upon fortunes as they stood on December 31st, 1919, was 10 per cent. for the first 50,000 marks, and increased up to 65 per cent. upon fortunes above 5 millions. It could be paid in thirty annuities for capital consisting of movable property, and in fifty annuities for that represented by immovables.

The above scheme of taxation is mainly the work of the late Herr Erzberger. The comparatively drastic manner in which he dealt with the whole question increased the hatred in which he was already held by a certain class.

In his famous budget report to the French Chamber, M. de Lasteyrie stated that the indirect taxation was far too low, and he instanced alcohol and other items which were let off too lightly. But I am in-

clined to think that he did not give sufficient credit for the high rate of direct taxation. The Brussels Conference came to the conclusion that German taxation was about as heavy as the country could bear. That opinion can only be accepted with some qualifications. Taxation in some respects is as high as it can be and perhaps even higher than it should be. In other ways, it certainly is insufficient. If the proper changes were made both ways the result would probably be some increase to the revenue. But the great fault does not lie with the enactments of the Reichstag, but in the fact that the Government does not fully enforce them; and that (as has already been shown) it is extravagant in its expenditure of the money which it does gather.

As late as February, 1921, the collection of many of the taxes above mentioned had hardly begun. Moreover, they were calculated mainly upon the values of 1918 and 1919. But, consequent upon the depreciation of the mark, fortunes have increased enormously since those years. This is shown by the statement that the value of shares quoted on the German bourses was 48 milliards of marks on December 31st, 1919; 150 milliards on December 31st, 1920; 200 milliards on June 30th, 1921; and infinitely greater to-day.

It is undeniable that fraud has been practised upon a colossal scale; if, indeed, it can be called fraud when the Treasury regards it with a leniency which is at least suspicious. Reference has already been made to the wholesale fashion in which capital has been sent abroad without any serious attempts being made to check this evasion. But the laxity of the

Government is equally clearly shown by the following figures. In 1920, the German succession duties, heavy as they are, only brought in 256 million marks. While in 1921 * France, with its population of 39 millions as compared to Germany's 61 millions, realised 800 million francs, although her succession duties are very much lower. No suggestion about the difference of the wealth of the two countries will explain this startling divergence.

Again, of the income-tax estimated in the budget of 1921, only a little more than one-quarter had been recovered up to September 30th, 1921. The Reichstag has not sought to hide its bent. In December, 1921, it boldly decreased the income-tax. Under this law the exemption figure was raised from 1,800 marks to 5,400 marks. No one can quarrel with incomes of the latter amount being exempted. There was undoubtedly good reason for lessening the burden upon those having small fortunes. But there was less excuse for the decreases upon the larger amounts. When the Finance Minister, Herr Hermes, defended this measure in the Reichstag on January 30th, 1922, he said that while in Germany a man with an income of one million paper marks paid a tax of 38·5 per cent., an Englishman having an equivalent revenue paid 33·4 per cent. and a Frenchman 25·6 per cent. Even if this comparison were correct it would seem that, in the circumstances, either the load on the Englishman was too heavy, or that on the German was too light. There is not sufficient difference between the percentages. But, as a matter of fact, the illustration

* The comparison is not for exactly the same period simply because the French and German fiscal years overlap each other.

was inexact, as it did not take into account the general incidents of direct and indirect taxation, or the real effect of the difference in exchange. A million paper marks was equal to about £1,250 at the then rate of exchange, and apparently that was the figure upon which Herr Hermes was basing his argument. But anyone who was in Germany at that period knows that 10,000 marks would buy at least two or three times as much as would £12 in England. The fair comparison, for living and income-tax purposes, with an income of one million marks, would have been an English revenue well over £2,500.

This measure is one of many proofs that the Government is not using every effort to make the country pay. But it would not be fair to say that it was fully indicative of the wishes of Dr. Wirth and his colleagues. Rather does it show the difficulty of their position. As they were only able to retain office by concessions to the industrialists on one side and to the Socialists on the other, they were not entirely free agents.

But perhaps the most striking proof of the bad faith of the German Government is contained in the report of the experts whom it asked to advise it in November, 1922—Professor Keynes (who can hardly be considered to be prejudiced against Germany), the Hon. R. H. Brand, Professor Jenks of New York, and Professor Cassel of Stockholm. In the course of their report they said: "In present conditions a basis is lacking for any sound statistical conclusions. We have been given many different figures, and we doubt if any of them deserve much credence. In order to form any judgment at all on the amount of the adverse

balance, which probably exists for the moment, we are driven to another method of calculation. On the debit side of the balance of payments Germany has had to cover her adverse balance of trade, her payments under the Treaty, and the flight of capital from the country. To meet this she has had to rely on certain items of "invisible exports," foreign credits, and purchases by foreigners of marks or mark assets. Somehow or other these different sets of items must have balanced even during the current year. If the adverse balance of trade has been as large as some people suppose, the purchase of mark assets by foreigners has to be put at an impossibly high figure. We draw from this the conclusion that the actual trade balance against Germany cannot even now be very great, and that if she is relieved of cash payments under the Treaty and of coal imports in replacement of reparation deliveries, it should not be beyond her capacity to pay her way."

This constitutes a severe indictment, amounting as it does to a definite assertion that the German Government has sought to deceive the Allies about the true position.

Leaving figures on one side, it is of some importance to observe just how hardly the present taxation and scale of living prices bear on the German people. Are they being overtaxed even if the laws are not being enforced?

Upon this branch of the subject extreme opinions are rife. One hears of a race oppressed by the heavy claims of a cruel conqueror; and, in other quarters, of a nation displaying a degree of luxury with which it was unacquainted before the war. Neither picture is accurate.

Undoubtedly those who suffer most in Germany are people with small fixed incomes, who either on account of age or previous mode of life are unable to earn anything. But the same condition is to be found in every country to-day. This class has obtained some relief by the recent raising of the exemption base for income-tax.

Those earning a small salary, especially clerks and similar employees, who are unable to bring any pressure to bear upon the Government, are likewise adversely affected. They do not live so well as they did before the war, while they are unable to save as they could always do prior to 1914. For although wages have been increased, yet, with some trade exceptions, the augmentation has not been proportionate to the advance in the cost of living. Moreover, the fall in the mark and the subsequent rise in the price of necessities always precedes by an appreciable period the advance in wages. The worker, therefore, has to tide over this recurring difficult period; which upon each occasion is accompanied by the uncomfortable feeling that it is not the last time.

The commercial class was not hard hit until recently. But their day of reckoning has come. They have been benefited by the false prosperity induced by the continuous issue of paper money and their ability to undersell in foreign markets by reason of the prevailing low mark wages in Germany. But the mark has now reached such depths that it has been necessary to continue to increase wages at home and at the same time to pay more marks to buy raw material abroad. This has already checked business in many lines, while it is bound to have a further effect that

way as soon as the Government stops using the printing press in order to get over each difficulty by a further issue of paper money.

But the Germans are neither an oppressed nor a depressed population. Sir Philip Gibbs, who is as sympathetic as he is observant, wrote in the *Review of Reviews* for August, 1921, that upon a visit to Germany he found the people entirely different from what they were immediately after the war. They were no longer listless and apathetic, but hopeful and energetic. They seemed to have both the desire and the means to enjoy themselves moderately.

Upon the whole there is little misery ; less than one would imagine after four years of warfare ; less—much less—than Germans themselves fearfully anticipated. The cry to the contrary is part and parcel of the political mentality which persists in proceeding upon the basis that the country is still dealing with enemies, and that it is, therefore, legitimate and praiseworthy to seek to deceive them. It is a short-sighted policy, which has already reacted upon Germany.

If the German people had been told, day in and day out for the last three years, that they would have to meet the payments under the Treaty, and if the Government had given an example of well-ordered economy, there would be little trouble to-day, for the German people obey those in authority as do no other in Europe. But they have been openly advised by their rulers that the payments claimed were unjust, and have been given reason to think that they might be evaded. It is therefore not strange that this nation, which, had it won the war, expected to live better than ever before, cannot see why it should

not to-day live as well as formerly, and considers itself ill-used because it is unable to do so.

Of the other extreme view Berlin is always the background. Few capitals ever represent their country. Certainly Berlin does not. The apparent luxury which is seen there is furnished either by profiteers (of whom Germany has even more than its fair share, and who are always very much in evidence) or by foreigners. Those who still possess a large income are, for the greater part, infected in the same way as their poorer brethren. They know not what the morrow will bring forth. The possible inroads of Socialism, the actual fluctuations of the mark, leave them without incentive to do anything permanently constructive. They spend as much as they make or receive, and add to the impression of luxury. It is only the great industrialists, upon whom the Government is so dependent that it cannot curb them or force them to respect the laws, who are comfortably amassing riches.

Germany is working—working hard, but the Government has not been doing its utmost to pay. That is partly the fault of the Allies. Their involved and vacillating proceedings have encouraged evasion rather than steady effort. They were even a handicap to the sincerity of Dr. Wirth, for his real strength lay in all political parties realising that the only alternative to a fulfilment of the engagements taken was a further abandonment of national rights.

To-day the artificial prosperity of Germany is tottering. At no time during the past two years would it have been possible to effect any healthy improvement without deflation, and deflation meant a period of unemployment. Germany has lived on a

false basis, and a crash is inevitable. The refusal to face the hard period after the war means that she must pass through a much more difficult period in order to get back to normal conditions. In that the German people are more to be pitied than blamed. It is their Government and the Allies who are at fault; their Government who thought that payment might thus be avoided, and the Allies who allowed them to pursue that course.

The situation to-day is grave both for Germany and for France. The experts to whom the German Government turned for advice say that a moratorium is necessary in order to stabilise the mark, and to render possible a foreign loan. That may well be correct. But the time is passed for the report of experts, who can always be contradicted by other experts. The only sane course is that the Allies should take control of the whole financial situation: a German Debt Commission, sitting permanently at Berlin. If Germany, like Turkey, cannot meet her obligations, there is no valid reason why the matter should not be arranged in the same way, and all the less so since Germany herself offers no other practical solution.

If a commission, free from political control, and too strong and too independent to be manipulated as Mr. Lloyd George manipulated the Reparation Commission, reports that Germany cannot pay at any fixed date, or can only pay so much, that will satisfy France that more cannot then be obtained, and will satisfy the United States (which it may yet be useful to do) that the Allies are at last acting seriously, and the German people will, in the long run, be the gainers

if her politicians devote their energies to showing them the way towards reasonable payment and the re-establishment of their good faith in the eyes of the world, rather than to covertly preaching evasion.

CHAPTER XII

GERMANY

“ IF we make peace on your terms now, you will resume the war in five or ten years, or as soon as you think you are strong enough ; that would be all the thanks we could expect from your nation. Our nation is the opposite of yours—honest and peaceable, not consumed with a lust of conquest, but only asking for peace. We wish to achieve peace for our children, and in order to achieve this we must set a barrier between ourselves and you. We need a strip of land which will continue to protect us against your actions. We know well enough that the reasonable and healthy element in your country did not urge on this war. Still it accepted the idea willingly.”

Anyone reading the above sentences to-day would have no doubt that they were addressed to a German by a Frenchman. But as a matter of fact, it was what Bismarck said to General Wimpffen during the negotiations for the capitulation of Sedan in 1870.*

A victorious country is always nervous about retaliation by its vanquished neighbour ; while in this

* This extract is taken from Sydney Whitman's *Conversations with Prince Bismarck*, only two or three words being changed. Whitman's account is a translation of that given in his *Récit Militaire*, by Captain d'Orcey, one of the French officers who was present at the meeting.

instance that feeling is intensified by the recollection that twice within the last half century France has been invaded, and by the knowledge that within the course of two centuries France and Germany have gone to war more than twenty times.

French anxiety is comprehensible and can only provoke sympathy. But what chiefly concerns us is to know what ground there actually is for alarm, and to search for any solution which may prevent another clash. For the dominating fact is that these two races, who live side by side, and who have such a constantly maintained tradition of hostility, are to-day as antagonistic to each other as at any other time in their history; and that if they should again go to war they would drag all Europe in their wake.

Certainly the disarmament of sixty million people in order to protect forty million is not a durable measure. It may delay, but it will not by itself prevent a conflict. It does not go to the root of the matter. As M. Briand has said, disarmament, to accomplish its purpose, must be moral as well as material. That really means that it must be voluntary, or by mutual consent. Nevertheless, a consideration of how this part of the Treaty of Versailles has been observed will throw a significant light upon the way in which Germany and the German Government regards those engagements.

Speaking at the Washington Conference, M. Briand said: "To make peace—I am speaking of land armaments—it is not enough to reduce effectives and diminish war material. There is another consideration which must not be neglected and which is vital for peace. Disarmament must be moral as well as

material, and I hope to prove to you to-day that there are grave elements of instability. There are conditions which France is bound to take into account from the point of view of her own safety. . . . Since the Armistice she has had many disappointments, and she has had to wait for the realisation of her expectations. For a year she has seen Germany arguing about her obligations, refusing to fulfil them and to pay for the devastated regions, and to disarm. In spite of such provocations France remained calm. She was anxious not to make a provocative gesture which might aggravate the situation. She has no hate in her heart, and she will do everything to bring to a close the series of bloody conflicts between Germany and herself.

"General Ludendorff has endorsed the terrible words of Moltke: 'Permanent peace is a dream, and it is not even a beautiful dream. War is part of the order of the world created by God. Without war the world would bury itself in the marshes of materialism.' On another occasion Ludendorff writes: 'In the future, war will be the last and deciding factor in policy.' . . .

"I come now to the material aspect of the question. I quite appreciate that it is not enough for a people to have evil designs to give effect to them. In modern warfare there must be enormous effectives with their cadres, large quantities of material, guns, rifles, machine-guns. We must not underrate the fighting value of the German soldier. Our men who have fought them know of what heroism they are capable. These men, survivors of the war, are in Germany—seven million of them—desirous of war.

They are not enrolled, but it is possible to mobilise them to-morrow . . .

"Let me deal with that point. Since the peace, Germany has established a so-called police-force, the Reichswehr. It was to be composed of 100,000 men, and in fact it is so composed, but of what men? Practically all officers and non-commissioned officers of the old army, and forming possible cadres for the army of to-morrow. Is this force solely devoted to police, as it should be under the terms of the Treaty? No, it is not. All the secret instructions of the Ministry of War advocate its training for war purposes. Moreover, since the end of the war Germany established a force of Einwohnerwehr, a force which became so alarming, so large and so well equipped that an ultimatum from the Allies was necessary to secure its disbandment. The Bavarian Prime Minister stated the other day that he had at his disposal an army of 300,000 men, well supplied with arms. That body was dissolved. That is true. . . . In addition to the Einwohnerwehr, there is another disquieting force, the Security Police, numbering 150,000 men, composed entirely of professional officers. We demanded its disbandment, and it was disbanded, but almost immediately afterwards another organisation took its place, the Protection Police, with precisely the same cadres. This makes altogether at the disposal of Germany 250,000 men who are in daily training to wage war anew.

Moreover, the 7,000,000 men who came back from war and returned to civil life are grouped in reality in these organisations which Germany has a genius for creating when she is pursuing a plan. . . . One

fact will give you an idea of the rapidity with which these forces can be mobilised. When the Upper-Silesian question took an acute turn, there appeared on the spot in a few days 40,000 men, with rifles, guns, machine-guns and armoured trains, a formidable effective force. As far as men are concerned, Germany could raise in a few weeks an army of between six and seven millions. She has the cadres to enrol them. . . .

"But it is said that there is no danger, for Germany has not the necessary material. The Allied Commission of Control has done much, but as regards material it can only take a general view. You have seen war, and you have seen with what rapidity immense armies have been constituted, amply equipped, and dispatched to our shores. Germany is a great industrial nation. All its industries were working at full pressure during the war, and they are still more developed to-day. There are in Germany the necessary plans and specifications for the manufacture of guns, machine-guns and rifles. Let a state of diplomatic tension be deliberately prolonged for a few weeks, and all the factories set to work to manufacture war material, and there you have Germany provided with an armament. Material can be purchased abroad without our knowledge or control. A ship cannot be launched without the fact being known, but rifles and machine-guns scattered throughout Germany cannot be controlled. We have had a similar experience in the past—a Prussia disarmed, but under what conditions, and by whom? Napoleon."

M. Briand's statements regarding the organisations created since the war are indisputable. In Germany many people minimise their importance, or pretend

that their purpose is not such as the French imagine. Others, and especially those of the Munich group, are either less guarded or more sincere in what they say. But no one in a position to know denies their existence.

It is likewise incontrovertible that the Ministry of War has issued instructions respecting the military training of the Reichswehr. Some of these letters and orders were read in the French Chamber by M. André Lefevre ; M. Barthou, then Minister of War, confirmed the allegations, and the German Government was unable to challenge their truth.

For many months after the Treaty of Versailles was signed Germany blandly ignored the stipulations that she should demobilise and disarm. It was only at Spa that the Allies woke to complete consciousness of that fact. Another and later date was then fixed for compliance ; and although that order also was not strictly observed (and even Mr. Lloyd George felt obliged to disclose to the House of Commons his uneasiness about German troops and war material), it may to-day be said that Germany has now fulfilled the letter of the disarmament clauses about as far as she can be forced to do so.

Undoubtedly they have not been obeyed in their entirety. Concealed guns have been found quite recently ; and there are others concealed which will never be found. Strange discoveries have at times been made when inspectors have insisted upon investigating buildings after the owners' vigorous protests that they contained nothing contraband. Perhaps the most curious and significant fact is that the Allied Commissions have never been able to find or to obtain surrender either of the famous 42 centimètre cannon

or of the Big Berthas which bombarded Paris from long range. The existence of the former was first suggested in August 1914, when the fortifications of Liège and of other Belgian towns were so rapidly demolished. But for some days the general impression was that they were the imaginative creation of those who were seeking for explanations. It was thought impossible that such monsters should be constructed; and still further beyond the bounds of possibility that they could have been made secretly. Since then, thanks mainly to the Saxon Major Solf, who commanded a 42 centimètre battery, the details are known. Each part of these cannon (which were first made by Krupp as far back as 1908) weighed about 20 tons, and could only be carried upon special waggons. In brief, they were not only immense but were difficult to transport. It is incredible that after the Armistice they (as well as the Big Berthas) disappeared in such a way that even the German Government could not, if it would, tell the Allied Commission where they are to be found.*

Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether it was worth while to push further a disarmament, the enormous

* For some days the Big Berthas were as much a puzzle as the 42-centimètre guns had been at the commencement of the war. They began to bombard Paris on Good Friday, and I recollect that on the afternoon of Easter Sunday I happened to discuss the matter in London with some members of the French Embassy (not, I hasten to add, the Military Attachés) who were in constant telephone communication with Paris; they told me that the opinion then was that the shells were dropped by unseen aeroplanes.

Since the above was written I have noticed that Delbrück denies this account. He says that the guns which did such damage at Liège were not made by Krupp. Presumably they were made at the Skoda Works. Moreover, that they were light enough to be carried by locomobiles and that the earlier and heavier guns had been discarded.

expense of which ranked before the Reparation claims.

Turning to the sentiments by which Germany is at present animated, I am inclined to think that M. Briand attached too much importance to Ludendorff's repeated declarations.*

There is, of course, not the slightest doubt that Ludendorff believes that war, and war alone, can, in the last analysis, decide the dissensions and the destinies of nations. He inherits the creed which Bismarck avowed when he said: "No, gentlemen; only with blood and iron shall we get what we are all striving for." It would be a mistake to think that Ludendorff says: "There must be future wars because Germany wants them." His sincere conviction is that so long as the human race endures, so long will there be intermittent conflicts. He remarks: "The dream of an eternal peace is only a dream." Therefore, holding that opinion, it is natural that he should want Germany again to have her day of success and that he should do his utmost to prepare her for it.

What would indeed be surprising is, if after a great nation had, for the first time in a century, lost a war, all its "blood and iron" generals should suddenly become cooing doves upon the day an adverse Treaty was signed. Why should these professional soldiers change their life-long conceptions? Why should anyone expect them to do so? They have always proclaimed that they believed in the sword, not because their country was the stronger (that is the condition upon which a politician, as distinguished

* An anonymous article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for November 1st, 1922, "L'Activité de Ludendorff," gives a fairly complete list of the latter's principal utterances up to that date.

from a soldier, holds that belief), but because it was the sword which in the end was bound to be the arbiter. There is no logical reason why defeat should alter their way of thinking. It is the people, not the soldier, whose faith in war changes according as it does or does not pay. But it would be extraordinary if, after the recent struggle, there were none of the military group left to express their unchanged conviction.

What is much stranger than Ludendorff's avowals is the importance which is attached to them. Every sane person must have foreseen that he was more likely than not to talk as he does. Therefore the only vital thing is to know what following he has. Is he a voice crying in the wilderness? Or is he the head of a powerful conspiracy?

Ludendorff has not (except in Bavaria) any considerable following amongst the German people *to-day*. Had the Kapp-Putsch kindled any popular enthusiasm it would have been a graver and a more portentous symptom than any number of Ludendorff's speeches. He himself was involved up to the neck in that plot. Although he was called only as a witness at the trial of the leaders in Leipzig (and a very nervous witness he was), the evidence moved a member of the Reichstag to ask why he was not accused with the others. The Government replied that, although Ludendorff had closely followed and had been kept fully informed of all that was being done, it was apparently the intention not to have his active personal participation until a certain measure of success had been attained, and that, as that moment never came, there was nothing which (under German law) actually incriminated him.

This attempt to bring back the old order of things had a promising beginning. The members of the Government were ousted from their offices; and for some days the Kapp clique ruled in their stead. But the ultimate result was a strike, which completely paralysed the country, and which eventually defeated the conspirators. When the troops were going through the Unter den Linden and the Brandenburger Tor, the crowds which lined the streets (Prussian crowds, docile to authority, and credited with an undue respect for everything military) expressed their sentiments by gibes and jeers. In reply these armed soldiers turned and fired at the unarmed people. That deed remains unforgotten, and has done untold harm to the Ludendorff party.

But what did temporarily revive and strengthen the Munich group was the Upper-Silesian plebiscite. For that Mr. Lloyd George was directly responsible. There never would have been a plebiscite had he not insisted upon it, disregarding warnings that to leave the question in abeyance, with a vote ahead, would only breed trouble, and that Germany was sure to protest in any event.

M. Clémenceau closed the discussion on the subject by saying: "I have nothing to add to what I have said. I persist in thinking that the plebiscite is a mistake. Since I am alone in this, I must bow; nevertheless, I continue to believe that we are headed for great difficulties in Upper Silesia and that a prompt settlement would have been better."

Time proved that M. Clémenceau was absolutely right—and Mr. Lloyd George wrong. When after months of uncertainty and irritation the plebiscite

was finally held, it only led to further trouble ; and in the end the boundaries had to be determined by the League of Nations. But this period gave the German military party an impetus for which it was duly grateful. As M. Briand told the Washington Conference, German troops and war material found their way to Upper Silesia and the borders in a surprising manner. They were unable to achieve their end. But the Munich group received new life from several months of martial activity. Ludendorff himself made the most of the occasion to arouse enthusiasm. Speaking at Königsberg in the summer of 1921, he said :* " I entertain no doubt that the destiny of our country will be decided sooner or later by a battle for that land to our east. When the hour comes remember what won us our battle at Tannenberg—the will of our leaders, our faith in those leaders, our discipline and courage in the face of death. The greater the need of our country, the more closely shall we rally round the black, white and red flag of Prussia. We are, and we wish to be, Prussians."

The leaders of the military party are undoubtedly ready to take advantage of any favourable situation. They look forward to the downfall of the present Government and of any similar successor. They do not expect to come into power immediately. They know that there would probably be a period of great

* This pronouncement was different in tone from (although not necessarily inconsistent with) the sphinx-like interview which Ludendorff gave to M. Jules Sauerwein of *Le Matin*, in September, 1921. He then declared that any war of revenge was, for an indefinite time, completely impossible, as no army could be organised secretly, and that the hope of the future lay in England, France and Germany combining against Bolshevism (*Le Matin*, September 21, 1921).

disorder, which would be to their advantage, as they, and they alone, could quell it. In the meantime they are able to tell a perplexed and irritated people, "Remember the prosperity we formerly gave you. It is true that we made an error: we counted upon the politicians doing their duty. They failed us. But these people now occupying our seats have not been able to bring you anything stable, and they never will. Other countries, and above all France, trust to force for their place in the world. Come back to us."

The argument is specious but not ineffective.

To follow the trend of German feeling on this subject, to judge how far Ludendorff represents, or (what is equally important) is likely to represent, the country, it is necessary to recapitulate facts which, while well known, have such a direct bearing upon the matter that they must be considered in connection with it.

Cause and effect can be traced more clearly in Germany than in any other great European country. In England, and for the greater part of the time even in France (for the Revolution was only the outburst of long growing grievances), the course of development has been so gradual that it is difficult to follow it through the slow march of centuries. But in Germany all is crowded into an extraordinarily short space of time. Wilhelm I. was crowned German Emperor at Versailles on January 18th, 1871, exactly 170 years after the first King of Prussia had crowned himself at Königsberg. In 1701, when that Hohenzollern promoted himself to royal rank, England had had a succession of sovereigns for nearly a thousand years,

and the country was calling a Hanoverian to the throne in order to avoid the Roman Catholicism of the Stuarts. The Hapsburgs had for generations enjoyed the succession of the Holy Roman Empire, while in France the fourteenth Louis was approaching the end of a long reign. No wonder that the royalties of Europe paid scant attention to this self-appointed newcomer, whose heritage was neither large nor fertile. Even more than fifty years later, during one phase of the Seven Years' War, Louis XV.'s generals were wont to boast of the lesson they would teach "le petit Marquis de Brandenburg."

When one seeks to find out how in less than two centuries this family became the head of the strongest empire on the Continent, history gives a plain answer. By force of arms. The great Elector laid the foundations of the fortunes of his house. In 1740, at the age of twenty-eight, Frederick II., Frederick the Great, became King of Prussia. His own father, Frederick William, had forged a powerful instrument for the genius of his son. He had spent thirty years in drilling his troops, although, with one minor exception, he never used them. In fact the chief troubles of his reign arose out of his successive quarrels with other rulers on account of his kidnapping propensities. Frederick William's honesty, impeccable in every other way, could not resist a tall recruit. The surest way to his heart was the present of a seven-footer for his Potsdam Grenadiers. There were 4,000 of these giants, some of them eight feet in height ; and Frederick the Great's first act after his accession was to send them all about their business.

Five months later died Charles VI., the elected

head of the Holy Roman Empire, leaving no son to succeed him. Frederick thought it was a good opportunity to seize Silesia. He went to work promptly ; and although his initial success was complete, he thereby involved himself in years of warfare. But he made Silesia part of Prussia. Later, in 1770, he shared in the partition of Poland. He thus increased Prussian territory by 9,465 square miles. It is only fair to add that the same spoliation gave Austria 62,500 and Russia 87,500 square miles respectively. The result of all this was that Prussia was a much larger and more powerful country when Frederick the Great died in 1786.

The Napoleonic wars were indeed a time of trial. The misplaced impetuosity of the most charming figure in Prussian history, Queen Louise, coupled with the miserable vacillations of her husband, spelt ruin.* But the story of that period is the foundation of Prince von Bülow's contention that Germany has usually proved herself to be greater in misfortune than in prosperity. Even Thiers (writing before 1870) admitted that the nation showed spirited endurance in time of defeat, and remained throughout faithful to her unsuccessful leaders. Finally Prussia emerged from the Congress of Vienna moderately triumphant ; although Treitschke and others have complained that had it not been for Lord Castlereagh

* Researches in the archives led Max Duncker and others to rehabilitate Frederick Wilhelm III. as a sage statesman. But the historian, Hans Delbrück, has recounted in his *Reminiscences* that the Crown Prince (later the Emperor Frederick) who had minutely studied the lives of all his ancestors, was stoutly opposed to that favourable view of his grandfather. Delbrück had adopted Duncker's opinion. But the Crown Prince's attitude led him to investigate further, with the result that he finally rejected many of Duncker's conclusions.

Germany would then have been allowed to keep Alsace-Lorraine.

By 1850 the population had increased to 16,000,000. It was at that time, under Frederick William IV., that Bismarck gave signs of becoming the real power in the State ; as he actually did after that monarch's collapse and death, and the accession of his brother Wilhelm I., in 1861. During the following six years the war, waged jointly with Austria against Denmark, led to part of Schleswig-Holstein being added to Prussia. The subsequent clash with Austria, which ended at Sadowa, gave Prussia the remaining portion of these duchies, as well as Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, Nassau and the Free City of Frankfurt. Finally came the conflict with France, resulting in the acquisition of Alsace-Lorraine, and the birth of the Empire.

That war also yielded a substantial indemnity: one which was then thought to be crushing, but which would to-day be considered a bagatelle. The French paid it off so much more quickly than Bismarck had anticipated, that four years later he was lamenting that he had not made it heavier. But it is characteristic of Prussian methods—of the system which Frederick the Great had inculcated—that this money did not have to go to pay the expenses of the war, or to lessen taxation afterwards. Therefore, after it had been drawn upon to provide several heavy gratuities, and to do much useful public work, there remained a balance of 40,000,000 thalers, which were placed in the Julius Tower at Spandau as an Imperial war fund which would go towards paying for the next conflict. That French gold has, of course, been used

since 1914. But it would be interesting to know just when it was taken from Spandau.

As a result of these various conquests the area of the German Empire in 1914 was 208,780 square miles ; while it had a population (and a steadily increasing one) exceeding 65,000,000.

In brief, it was the constant and deliberate policy of the Kings of Prussia to extend the frontier of their country at the expense of their neighbours. Bismarck has left himself on record to that effect. He recounted to Moritz Busch that at a meeting of the Council of State, some time after the death of King Christian of Denmark, he was trying to persuade Wilhelm I. to seize the Danish duchies. Other arguments having failed, Bismarck reminded the King that all his predecessors, except his late brother, had added something to the realm ; and asked him if he did not wish to do likewise. The suggestion had its effect, while Bismarck, who was not a hypocrite any more than he was a coward, later insisted upon having the incident inserted in the protocol of the meeting, from which it had been omitted out of a quite unnecessary regard for his feelings.

Prussia achieved her position in the world by repeated aggressions ; and there is no manner of doubt that, had Germany been victorious in the recent war, she would have annexed much further territory. In fact, during the early days of the contest she made no secret of what she proposed to do.

Her determination to retain at least part of Belgium was announced in the fullest details, while when the Roumanian Government complained of the conditions imposed, it was told : " You don't know

when you are lucky. Wait until you see the terms which we have ready for the Entente, and then you will realise what is a hard peace." In view of the facts it is interesting to read Ludendorff's indignant protest against those who support the Treaty of Versailles. "They declare that if we had been the conquerors on the Western Front we would have imposed upon the Entente an analogous peace. We would not have done so. How could we have been able to do so, considering the tendencies of our character?" But one cannot reconcile that tender estimate of the German military character with the approbation which he himself accords later to a rule laid down by Schlieffen in a preface to an edition of Clausewitz: "Once those two results have been obtained (the defeat of the enemy's forces and the occupation of his territory) the war still cannot be considered to be finished so long as the will of the enemy remains unbroken; that is, so long as his government and his allies have not been forced to sign the peace or his people have not been subjugated."

But despite all this the Germans are not a warrior race. They are not (to apply the words of Anatole France—who was not referring to the Germans) "*des vrais militaires, qui prennent tout et ne gardent rien, comme, par exemple, les Français.*"

The Germans are the antithesis of the Poles, of whom their king, John Casimir, used to say that their fatal defect was a complete lack of the virtue of obedience. For they are distinguished by a capacity for work, and a desire to know that someone is set in authority over them. These qualities make them thorough and

capable soldiers. But that is an entirely different thing from being a war-like race.*

The German nation was told (and never more persistently than in the years immediately preceding 1914) that it had become a great world power by force of arms. From that it was but a step—a natural step—to indicate that the successful past was the only safe guide for the future. They were taught that the prosperity of the Fatherland was dependent upon the maintenance of a strong army. They therefore willingly made all needful sacrifices. It is said that in 1914 the governing class wanted war, but that the German people did not. That is entirely misleading. The fact is that the former said that there must be war, that the moment had arrived. While the people, secure in the knowledge that for two generations their rulers had never made a mistake, were ready to do as they were told. Many regretted that a war was essential. But since the word had been spoken none doubted its necessity or questioned its wisdom. Even those Socialist members of the Reichstag, who in Brussels a few days earlier had assured Jaurès that they would never vote the credits, quietly fell into line. The people embarked upon the adventure not with more brutal instincts than any other nation (I am not referring to the German mode of conducting war), but with a calm assurance that the victor's spoils would be theirs. They were quite prepared to make the most of them.

They never doubted that they would be victorious.

* It is both curious and indicative that Germany's two great military songs, *Die Wacht am Rhein* and *Deutschland über Alles*, were both written about the same time. The former was first heard in 1840, the latter in 1841.

Therefore, when one day in October, 1918, the newspapers told the country that Germany had asked her enemies for an armistice, the announcement precipitated the revolution. For despite Ludendorff's frantic protests in his series of exculpatory books, it is an undeniable fact that it was the disintegration of the Front which led to the revolution, and not the revolution which caused the Front to crumble.

Thus ended a period of 175 years, during which Prussia, and later the Empire, had experienced an extraordinary measure of extension and development, based entirely upon the theory that right without might was worth little, but that might even without right was invincible.

Notwithstanding the many rumours in the Press of other countries, the news of the collapse of the Front came as a complete surprise and a stunning shock to the German people. The winter of 1916-1917 had been a terrific strain. But food had been somewhat more plentiful during 1917-1918; and that in itself had sustained confidence. It was indeed felt that the struggle was being unduly prolonged. But none contemplated a defeat. The Foreign Office and the General Staff had kept their secret well—too well. Ludendorff to-day blames the Government for letting the blow fall without warning. But with his habitual lack of clarity, both of thought and expression, he also complains that the Government did not constantly proclaim Germany as certain to be the victor.

In any event, it would have been better had the nation been prepared for events that both the Government and the General Staff had for some months known to be inevitable. But no step had been taken

in that direction. If one asks a dozen average wage-earners about their impression when the news was blurted out, one is struck by the sameness of the answers: "We could not believe it. We were benumbed. For some days we could not think." The confusion which was rampant in high places did not help to clarify the situation. For, running true to form, the Germans did everything thoroughly. When the General Staff began to be alarmed, it ended by getting into a panic. Ludendorff had pressed for an armistice in a fit of nervous trepidation. His subsequent denials are confuted by the established facts. His excuse to-day is: "My idea was that it would be necessary to continue the fight, if the enemy did not grant us an honourable peace." Count Hertling's *Memoirs* answer that question. "But, if we were able to continue the fight, why was it necessary to have an armistice without delay?" It might have been added that in urging the Government to act without an hour's delay Ludendorff had said that the Front could not be held; a message to which his latest book omits any allusion.*

Ludendorff left, but the panic was infectious. The telegram instructing the unfortunate Erzberger to accept Foch's terms, and which was signed in the name of the Chancellor, was really sent by an affrighted General Staff.

Later, the people began more calmly to ponder upon what had happened, to seek for the reasons, and to search for the culprits. Informed opinion in Germany does not really differ greatly from that

* See Professor Hans Delbrück's *Ludendorff Peint par Lui-Même*, p. 129.

held in other countries as to why Germany lost the war. It is not denied that the organisation which was constantly being perfected had become too heavy for the individual bases upon which all organisations must rest. Mechanical efficiency undermined itself.

Some days before the Battle of the Marne there was every reason to believe that the Germans would take Paris. Joffre himself thought that it was futile to try to save the capital. Its fall did not necessarily mean the end of the war. But who can say how far-reaching would have been the result of such a calamity? Yet if the Germans had not exaggerated Helmuth von Moltke's system of allowing great latitude to the commanders of the different armies, if the General Staff had been in somewhat closer touch with the Front than it could possibly be from Luxembourg (even with all the advantages of telegraph and telephone wires), it is probable that there would have been no Battle of the Ourcq, and in that event there would have been no Battle of the Marne.

Although the organisation was wonderful, the individuals who directed it were a sham. The Emperor aped Frederick the Great. But his only resemblance to his famous ancestor lay in a certain false versatility. He touched everything. He could preach a sermon (as he did in Jerusalem), tell an architect how to erect a building, or teach a general how to conduct a campaign. He had undoubtedly some personality. He inspired a certain degree of attachment in those close to him; but no one of his intimates considered him to be a great man. He was only the prince of amateurs. Unlike Frederick the Great, before whom men trembled, he did not rule but was ruled. Those

surrounding him dreaded his petulance, and still more his indiscretions; but they did not take him seriously. Kiderlen Waechter was the strongest successor of Bismarck at the Foreign Office.* His private letters to his friend, the Baronne de Y., a Russian lady, throw a strange, if crude, light upon how the Emperor was regarded and treated by those responsible for the government of the Empire. In this correspondence the Kaiser was called "La fourrure," and Bethmann-Hollweg, who was then Chancellor, "La petite bête." In writing to his friend, Kiderlen Waechter labelled them "a pair of old women," while his opinion of the Kaiser's ability was shown by the following incident.

In July, 1911, the British and German fleets were manœuvring in Norwegian waters. It was arranged that they should meet on a certain date. The day chosen was just before the Emperor's own visit to Norway came to an end. The vision of what might happen frightened Kiderlen Waechter. As he wrote to the Baronne de Y——, "with his temperament, having those two great fleets before his eyes, he will lose all equilibrium and go beyond all limits, and Heaven only knows what stupidities he will commit." The Foreign Secretary, therefore, tried to persuade the British Ambassador to get a later date fixed; and in telling his success to the Baronne de Y——, he said, referring to the Emperor: "In his exuberance he would have said and done things which would have made the English distrustful, because, not understanding his stupidity, they would think that he wanted

* It is true that in these latter years his excesses—alcoholic and otherwise—undermined his constitution.

to compromise them in the eyes of their friends. . . . And with all that, we would not in reality have had any political object, nothing except the amusement of 'La fourrure.' "

While Dr. Rudolf Steiner has recounted that von Moltke, in attempting to explain how the Minister of War had once denied in the Reichstag the existence of any plan involving the invasion of Belgium, said that only the Chancellor really knew about it.* When Steiner asked him if the Emperor had not also been in his confidence; he replied: "Jamais de la vie. Il était trop bavard et trop indiscret. Il l'aurait raconté au monde entier."

As the Supreme War Lord, the title by which he so often referred to himself, he proved to be a sorry farce. At the best, he could never rise above a theatrical display, as when he appeared on the scene, ready to enter Nancy at the head of his troops which were expected to capture that town. At the worst, he became melancholy and read the Bible. Before the end, Ludendorff treated him with scant respect. After the crash he complained that during the war he had never known exactly what was going on, and that he had been sent from the Western Front eastwards or *vice-versâ*, as those in command dictated. The statement was quite exact. He was considered a nuisance. No one wanted him around when there was serious work to be done, and the unfortunate man was continuously bundled from pillar to post.

* Ludendorff confirms the statement that the Chancellor knew in advance the plan of military operations, including the projected invasion of Belgium. But he does not say whether or not it had been disclosed to the Emperor. See *Conduite de la Guerre et Politique*, p. 82, note.

In the end he scuttled away into Holland. It is said that he might have been killed had he returned to Berlin. Certainly he was not urged to do so, although that was chiefly because it was felt that his presence would add to the difficulties of the situation. But he then had six sons ; and had those seven gone back together a life or two might have been lost, but the glory of a military dynasty would have been preserved intact. If Wilhelm II. believes that the departed can converse with each other he must have some uneasy moments when he imagines his reception by the Great Elector and by Frederick the Great, not to mention Bismarck.*

It is fair to add that, despite his various memoranda on despatches, the former Emperor cannot be held personally responsible for the war. This opinion, sincerely held by many who were near him, seems to be substantiated by facts. He was naturally a prey to the strongest influence around him. Once Bismarck was ousted from office, the delicate balance of power between the military and political elements ceased to exist. Even Bismarck had sometimes been obliged to give way to von Moltke (with whom he was temperamentally never in sympathy), and notably about the retention of Metz after 1870.

But none of Bismarck's successors were ever able to hold their own against the General Staff. For the military influence was a constant and steady pressure upon Wilhelm ; while that of the politicians, whom he could more easily dismiss because he could more easily replace them, was changeable and fluctuating.

* The ex-Kaiser's *Memoirs* are remarkable (apart from their inexactitudes) for the appalling mediocrity of mind which they display.

For years the Emperor was controlled by the leaders of the army groups. He could not have forced them to go to war against their judgment ; but he would have been powerless to prevent them when they had determined to do so. He was a willing, if unconscious, tool, but not the moving or originating spirit.

The Crown Prince did not play any worthier rôle. Some years before the war he made a notorious speech in which he spoke of the joy of battle, and expressed the hope that one day he would in person lead his regiment into action. When the chance came he showed that he was no soldier. There is no reflection upon his courage, although he took full advantage of a Prince's privilege to keep out of harm's way. But he did not even seriously attempt to command "The Crown Prince's Army."

Even the Chief of the Staff was carrying burdens meant for more stalwart shoulders, for the plan of campaign was the daring conception of a strong man, Schlieffen :* and it needed a strong man to carry it through. But von Moltke (who was to some extent under the influence of spiritualists) had neither the courage to abandon it nor the strength to push it to its logical conclusion. He adhered more or less to its letter, but entirely departed from its spirit.

The statesmen of the Empire were no better. They kept the outward semblance of the Bismarckian period in so far as that could be done by bold or blustering words, but they had neither Bismarck's resolution nor his caution ; while, above all, they lacked his wisdom and had absolutely forgotten what he had taught.

* Wilhelm II. himself chose Schlieffen in preference to Waldersee, to whom von Moltke had given his own succession.

Before his death the great Chancellor complained that his successors had abandoned his policy "at its most vital point"—a good understanding with Russia. This was all the more remarkable as the dying injunction of Wilhelm I. to his grandson was always to remain on friendly terms with that country.*

Moreover, for all his temerity, Bismarck always knew, and carefully observed, the limits to which he could safely push his policy ; hence his uniform success. In his later years he was accustomed to say that Europe would never in the long run tolerate a dictatorship of any single person or power. "No cock of the walk business ; Europe will not put up with it," were his words. Unfortunately, that is exactly what Wilhelm II. could not comprehend.

But if informed opinion in Germany is fairly clear as to what led to the disaster, popular opinion is not absolutely certain that the German armies were really defeated by the Allies. The leaders of the military party know well enough (none better) that Germany was beaten in the field. But they carefully keep that knowledge to themselves, and the average man is by no means sure that it was so. Without a shadow of doubt, Germany realises that she lost the war. The signs on all sides are too painfully evident for her to ignore them. It is not only the economic situation,

* Wilhelm I. said this the day before his death, when his mind was beginning to wander and when he was really talking to Bismarck, although he thought it was his grandson. Von Moltke (the uncle), like Bismarck, considered the Russian question as of paramount importance for the future of Germany. But, unlike the Chancellor, he thought that the time had gone by when German influence counted for much in Russia, and that that country was entering upon a national life of its own which was bound to bring it into conflict with Germany.

there is also the occupied territory ; and there are the various Commissions (composed of foreigners), who go about the country exercising drastic powers. Nevertheless, the people are not absolutely convinced that their armies suffered any crushing defeat. With them seeing is believing ; and especially is that true about military matters.

Those broad Berlin streets (notably the disproportionately wide Unter den Linden) seem made for processions. Had the Allied troops marched through the capital the feeling would to-day be different from what it is. It would not have been any more bitter ;* indeed, the idea that Germany lost without having been beaten is the very basis of the bitterness and the dangerous feelings which now prevail in some quarters.

On the contrary, public opinion would have been healthier and sounder had there been a glimpse of the Allied troops. When the Armistice terms were being discussed, Colonel House twice asked Marshal Foch whether, as a soldier, he would prefer that Germany should accept or refuse the conditions which were about to be offered. Foch replied that the only object of war was to achieve certain results ; and that, as he would not ask for more even after winning further battles, he did not think it right to shed any more blood. Such a statement stands unanswerable except by those who are in a position and who are willing to take responsibility. That was the situation of M. Poincaré, who did not hesitate to insist that the Armistice ought to be signed on German soil. He continued

* When Napoleon occupied Berlin after Jena there was no bitter feeling, but a great deal of hero-worshipping (see Arthur Levy's *Napoléon et la Paix*). Any occupation of Berlin in 1918 would have been a vital error : a march through the capital would have sufficed.

to urge it until Clémenceau threatened to resign. If his advice had been followed, Foch would probably have been less alarmed about the safety of France than he has sometimes been since, and a reduction of the size of the French army might now seem more feasible.

But when Germans turn from dwelling on the past to a consideration of the future, they do not see much virtue in some of the remedies which the Allies have prescribed. The shallow idea that everything would be changed by a parliamentary form of government on the Anglo-Saxon model was the offspring of ignorance and egotism. The only excuse for its existence was the delusion that the German people had been forced to fight against their will ; whereas, in fact, they were quite content to fight—confident that they would win, as they had so consistently done in the past.

Legislative forms do not change national temperaments. Before 1914 there was no serious clamour in Germany for a different constitution. To-day there is little enthusiasm for the one which has been set up. The loss of the war made Germany democratic. But the Treaty of Versailles did not make her republican. Probably the majority of the people would prefer a monarchy on the English system ; and probably that would best meet the needs of the country. Certainly, the monarchical party is much larger than the military one, although the latter does its utmost to make out that the two are identical.

There is not at present any active Royalist party. The general tone about the former Emperor was sympathetic until his recent marriage. It is almost thought that he was more sinned against than sinning. But it is universally admitted that he can now never

return. The name of the Crown Prince generally evokes animosity and contempt. It is not apparent why Germans draw such a distinction between the father and the son, especially when one remembers that many months before the collapse the Crown Prince (doubtless inspired by someone with more foresight than himself) warned the Emperor that the continuance of the war would entail both the downfall of the dynasty and the ruin of Germany. But the fact remains that, while there is a kindly feeling for the former Emperor, there is none for his eldest son. Nor is there any attachment to the person of any other Hohenzollern. It is quite likely that Germany will some day have a constitutional monarch. But there is at present no suitable candidate; nor is that the question of the hour.

The remainder is divided into a much larger percentage which thinks that the future of Germany for a generation or more lies along the path of peace, and again a still larger percentage which is yet in a state of indecision, angry with the military party which brought them to ruin, and not yet having acquired any great confidence in a régime which has still to show that it can lead the way to better times.

It is true that though Germany has fulfilled, more or less faithfully, the letter of the Treaty regarding disarmament, she cannot be said to have yet complied with the spirit of the Allies' demands. But the opinions and ambitions of a nation cannot be controlled or governed by treaties. Germany is at the turning of the ways. It is too much to say with certainty that she would become pacific in her ways were she encouraged to do so. But it can be said absolutely that

she never will, unless she does get some encouragement ; and the only kind which will count in the least is example. Indeed, that state of mind almost has the authority of the Treaty itself, for the clauses regulating German disarmament are preceded by the following paragraph : " En vue de rendre possible la préparation d'une limitation générale des armements de toutes les nations, l'Allemagne s'engage à observer strictement les clauses militaires, navales et aériennes ci-après stipulées."

Whether or not it was wise to have inserted these words may be questioned. But there they stand.

Germany, therefore, can fairly look round in search of that general limitation of the armaments of all countries, to facilitate which she is considered to have promised to reduce her own effectives. What does she see ?

On one side France, with the strongest army in Europe, and the largest in the world, with the possible exceptions of Russia and Japan.

On the same side Belgium, with her population of seven and a half million and an army of 100,000.

Denmark, small but none too friendly, has a population of nearly three millions and an army of something under 15,000.

On another side Poland, equally an hereditary enemy. For it was Frederick the Great who, together with Austria and Russia, divided Poland in 1772. The sequence of that notorious spoliation has furnished a curious instance of how the just sometimes see more clearly into the future than those who are more clever. Marie Thérèse (who could fight as stubbornly as anyone when she thought she was right)

abhorred the transaction. She wrote to Kaunitz: "When all my lands were invaded, and I knew not where in the world I could find a place to be brought to bed, I relied on my good right and the help of God. But in this thing, where not only public law cries to Heaven against us, but also natural justice and sound reason, I must confess never in my life to have been in such trouble, and am ashamed to show my face." While a few days later she gave her official assent in these words: "PLACET, since so many great and learned men will have it so; but long after I am dead, it will be known what this violating of all that was hitherto held sacred and just will give rise to."

It gave rise to the futile agitation of many generations. In 1914 all unprejudiced students of history would have admitted that Poland had been despoiled in 1772, but few, if any, would have predicted that there would ever again be an independent Poland. Germany, by her own acts, translated that dream into the realm of possibilities.

The Poles are a chivalrous but not a very practical race. Undoubtedly, they are idealists; but idealists are not the people best fitted to launch a new state in the seething cauldron of to-day's world politics. Poland's position is not made easier by having such neighbours as Germany and Russia, Germany who covets what she has lost, and Soviet Russia who (as M. Krassin told me before the unsuccessful onslaught of 1920) knows that she can at any time disturb the whole of Europe by attacking Poland; and the latter cannot always count on having a Weygand to come to her assistance. France has unofficially taken this

new country under her protection. But until recently that was to some extent offset by the scant courtesy with which she was always treated by Mr. Lloyd George. Perhaps the former Prime Minister agrees with Bismarck's view that "liberated nations are not grateful but exacting." Poland has a population of about 25,000,000. It is difficult to gauge the actual, as distinguished from the paper, strength of the army. Estimates run all the way from 175,000 to 450,000. Probably between 250,000 and 300,000 is near the truth.*

In considering the position of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Balkan States, one can only imagine that the treaty-makers intended to augment German territory on that side in order to compensate for what they had deducted from others.

Prussia gave Austria her deathblow at the Battle of Sadowa. Mommsen saw that many years ago and predicted that Austria was "destined to become the Turkey of Europe, a conglomeration of states, each interminably struggling against all the rest." Bismarck also realised the danger of a dissolution of the Dual Empire. He hoped that it might be long delayed, but he knew that, when it happened, Germany would doubtless share in the heritage. "The Bavarians are the natural link with Austria, for the Germans in Austria are people of the real Bavarian race," he said to Anton Memminger in 1890. While in his own *Reminiscences* he describes his enthusiastic reception in Austria when he went to Vienna in 1879 to arrange the alliance, and adds: "All these phenomena

* At the time of the Bolshevik invasion the figure was given at 714,000.

were the unequivocal expression of the desire of the population of the capital and the German provinces which I had traversed to witness the formation of a close friendship with the new German Empire. I could not doubt that community of blood would meet with similar sympathies in the German Empire, in the South more than in the North. . . . It is possible that the wedge of the Slav (Czech) population . . . has intensified in the German Austrian those German sympathies.*

Without suggesting that there would have been any justification whatever for carving up Germany, one is to-day inevitably reminded of those sanguine people who used to say that after the Treaty of Versailles that country would pass through a period of disintegration. To-day the Bavarians have less regard for the Prussians than they ever had. But whereas before Bavaria was sometimes more galled than pleased by her place in the Empire, she is now determined that no provocation, however great, shall make a rift in the Reich.

On the other hand the Four, in parcelling out Austria-

* Bismarck's perspicacity is well illustrated by his view of the position of Germany in relation to Russia and Austria-Hungary. The possible attitude of Russia was a constant source of uneasiness to him, and he often regretted that he had been unable to include that Empire in a triple alliance. But he recognised clearly that a pact with Russia alone would never suffice, as any treaty with that country was largely personal—"that is, it depends on the moods of the reigning Emperor of Russia" (and, as time showed, also upon the monarch being secure upon his throne). Bismarck never forgot that it was Frederick the Great's sarcastic remarks about Elizabeth which arrayed Russia against him during the Seven Years' War. On the other hand, he had no illusion about the weakness of the Austrian Empire, and the danger in the rivalry of the various races of which it was made up. But he thought that any Austrian Government would be faithful to its engagements.

Hungary, would seem to have been at particular pains to segregate six million Germans in one country, and to cut them off from all the wealth in which they had formerly shared. To-day Austria is a shell; one large town and a poor country burdened with debt, and having a population which is overwhelmingly German in blood and in sentiment. When the deed had been done, some bright intellect (history will disclose who it was) suddenly perceived that in the ordinary course of events this marooned and impoverished country would naturally seek its salvation in a union with Germany. To guard against that contingency it was prohibited by Treaty. In those days the Four still had a naïve belief in the binding virtue of their edicts. But already (defying orders to the contrary), part of Austria has held a plebiscite by which its desire to become annexed to the Reich has been clearly announced. Barring the upheaval of a Balkan war (and perhaps anyway) it is certain that sooner or later that will be the sequel; and Germany counts on it.

This attempt to muzzle Austria throws a curious light upon the peripatetic path along which the doctrine of self-determination was pushed at the Peace Conference. Mr. Wilson, who was its godfather, was occasionally inclined to forget it. But sometimes Mr. Lloyd George would not allow him to do so. About Shantung they both, indeed, agreed to ignore the theory; and consequently China did not sign the Treaty of Versailles. But when it came to Upper Silesia, and Mr. Wilson was again oblivious to his former pronouncements, the British Prime Minister promptly declared that it was "Mr. Wilson who has proclaimed on every occasion the right of self-

determination," and Wilson wilted. But no one had a word to say for Austria. Mr. Lloyd George apparently did not remember that when talking about Upper Silesia he had remarked: "But the legal is not the only aspect; there is sentiment, and I want to know about that." He did not want to know it about Austria.

Only Clémenceau, who was not hampered by foolish statements in the past, was consistent throughout. He did not pretend to believe in the doctrine of self-determination, and therefore he was never caught in self-contradiction. He certainly was not an idealist, but he recognised that the world whose fate they were settling would neither comprehend nor appreciate idealistic arrangements.

Austria, with its population of about six millions, is allowed to have an army of 30,000. At present its forces are somewhat under that figure. Moreover, Soldiers' Councils are in control; and although they acted reasonably during the recent trouble with Hungary, their mere existence militates against the value of this army as a fighting unit.

But if Austria is friendly to Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, which has a population of between thirteen and fourteen millions, is very much less so. Indeed, that country has at present some close connections with France. Its army, which is better equipped than the Polish army, numbers about 150,000, and is being trained, and well trained, by French officers. French capital is also now invested in the famous Skoda munition works, which manufactured the big guns that in the early days of the war, so astonished the Allies, M. Schneider being now one of the directors of this

company. While M. Benès, probably the ablest of Balkan statesmen, is the firm friend of France.

Czecho-Slovakia has its own German problem. Its population includes more than 2,500,000 Germans. They are not greatly liked by the other nationalities of which this new country is compounded (and which, it may be said in passing, do not like each other), but if not popular they are useful and even necessary to the economic life of the state.

Hungary, with its seven and a half million, has, like Austria, an army of 30,000.

Finally, there is the great unknown, Russia, with its inexhaustible population and its well-disciplined Red Army. Ludendorff professes to be frightened by the Russian menace; but in reality Germany has more hopes than fears of that country.

Thus sixty-one million people see on all sides smaller and less populated countries (always excepting Russia from that category) with proportionately larger armies. The Treaty of Versailles states that German disarmament is to be a prelude to a general one. Whether or not that is practicable may be questioned. But what is unquestionable is that it is impossible for ever to prevent a nation of that size from arming unless either it is constantly held in check by a more powerful force, or it is led to see, by the example of adjacent countries, that disarmament is a matter of good policy. Apparently the theory of the Treaty of Versailles was based on the latter principle. In its practice there has only been signs of the former. That cannot continue indefinitely without, sooner or later, leading to an explosion.

The German people still remember the deception

they experienced in the late war, and are to-day inclined to doubt whether the best results are to be obtained by taxing themselves to maintain an army which must finally be used in a gamble. If their present Government (which is a prey to Socialists on the one side and to the great industrialists on the other) floundered less and accomplished more, the people would be less uncertain. As it is, they are influenced by their neighbours. If Germany is to comply permanently with disarmament demands, she will have to be given a lead. So long as others regard it as a creed for export purposes only, Germany is unlikely to believe in it.

But the question goes far deeper than that. For a century and more the world has said (and with reason) that Germany understood force, and force only. If we are convinced that that is still so to-day and will never change (as, for instance, is M. Clémenceau), then it is evident that not only for the safety of France, but for the welfare of civilisation, we must always be prepared.

If we compel France to take alone the measures for her protection (although they would also be indirectly the assurance of our own safety), we will thereby force her to maintain a larger standing army than she can well afford. Likewise we shall probably be advancing by some years the date of a war from which we shall be unable to stand aside.

There were two alternatives. Foch has always said that the only guarantee of security was the Rhine. Others before him had held the same idea. It was, I think, Castlereagh who, during the Congress of Vienna, remarked : " Les Prussiens à Aix-la-Chapelle !

Quelle imprudence! Avant cent ans ils seront à Anvers." His prophecy was literally fulfilled.

Foch, who told the Peace Conference that the occupation of the Rhine "from Cologne to Coblenz and to Mayence, not of the Pays Rhénans," was essential, stated later that that would need only six divisions. His exact words were:

"La garantie de sécurité comme la garantie de paiement, c'était le Rhin. Là était notre vraie frontière, une frontière que nous pouvions tenir avec rien. J'avais fait mes comptes; une division à Cologne, une à Mayence, une à Coblenz, trois autres derrière, six divisions en tout. Avec cela je me chargeais de tenir et de défendre tout le Rhin. Avec cela, nous pouvions désarmer."*

There are, I think, very obvious reasons why any permanent military occupation would be undesirable. But a buffer state would more or less have served the same purpose and would, I understand, have satisfied Foch. It might have been under the control of the League of Nations, with a joint mandate given to the Allies, and possibly, after the lapse of a certain time, also to Germany. Napoleon III.'s first thought, when he was surprised and alarmed by the sweeping defeat of Austria at Sadowa, was that a buffer state would be the best insurance against war with Prussia. The suggestion, tentatively put forward by the Empress Eugénie, embarrassed but did not elicit any encouraging response from the diplomatist, whom Bismarck had sent to Paris to calm Napoleon's fears. Traces of the same idea can be found at earlier dates.

* Interview given to M. Stéphane Lauzanne, *Le Matin*, December 19th, 1921.

The difficulties inherent to this plan are many and manifest, and they would not be lessened by any species of international control—which it is better to avoid whenever possible. But I know of no proposal which would achieve the same end which is not open to even more serious objections. I hasten to add that this view is not based on the agitation in the Rhine country for a neutral republic. I am aware that various meetings have been held in favour of the creation of such a state. But such examination as I have been able to make of this situation has left me with the impression that they do not give an absolutely accurate idea of the prevalent sentiments.* Nor do I agree with Heine's dictum that "*Les Rhénans ne sont ni des Allemands ni des Français ; ce sont des Belges.*"

This solution is no longer opportune. But it is regrettable that M. Clémenceau did not adopt and adhere firmly to it, rather than finally take a stand on the claim for military occupation of the Rhine, and eventually abandoning that in exchange for the promise of guarantees.

The promises were not fulfilled. The only remaining alternative in the general interest is an alliance between this country and France. The exact terms of such an agreement were drafted at the Cannes Conference ; but M. Briand's unfortunate essay on the links seems to have interred it. The pact proposed by Mr. Lloyd George read as follows :

1. In the event of direct and unprovoked aggres-

* At an assembly held at Bonn in December, 1921, 500 delegates, representing 193 districts, asked the Washington Conference to create a neutral republic in the interest of European peace.

sion against the soil of France by Germany, Great Britain will immediately place herself at the side of France with her naval, military and air forces.

2. The High Contracting Parties reassert their common interest in Articles 42, 43 and 44* of the Treaty of Versailles, and will consult together should any breach of them be threatened or any doubts arise as to their interpretation.

3. The High Contracting Parties undertake further to concert together in the event of any military, naval or air measures inconsistent with the Treaty of Versailles being taken by Germany.

4. The present Treaty shall impose no obligations upon any of the Dominions of the British Empire, unless and until it is approved by the Dominions concerned.

5. This Treaty shall remain in force for a period of ten years and shall, if approved by both parties, be renewable at the end of that period.

The obvious weakness of this agreement (as M. Briand's opponents in Paris immediately realised) was its short duration. A promise of support for ten years did not carry matters far. France could

* These articles of the Treaty read as follows :

42. Germany is forbidden to maintain or to construct any fortifications either on the left bank of the Rhine, or on the right bank of the Rhine to the west of a line drawn 50 kilometres to the east of the Rhine.

43. In the area defined above, the maintenance and assembly of armed forces, either permanently or temporarily, and of military manoeuvres of any kind, as well as the upkeep of all the permanent works for mobilisation are in the same way forbidden.

44. In case Germany violates in any manner whatever the provisions of Articles 42 and 43, she shall be regarded as committing a hostile act against the Powers signatory to the present Treaty, and as calculated to disturb the peace of the world.

probably hold her own alone against any German attack within that period; although, of course, the knowledge that such a Treaty existed would have a moral effect. Moreover, any arrangement of this nature should be bilateral; it should provide that France should come to Great Britain's assistance in the event of any "direct and unprovoked aggression by Germany." Undoubtedly that contingency is highly unlikely to occur. But history is replete with surprises.

In any event, it will be a world-wide misfortune if further steps against Germany are necessary, except in the way of strict financial control. If France were compelled to occupy the Ruhr, it would be a misfortune for Germany, because it would add to the discouragement and confusion already produced by governments which have had only the negative aim of evading their treaty obligations. It would be a misfortune for France, because, quite unjustly, her enemies would advertise it as a proof of her designs to extend her territory. It would be a misfortune for Europe, because it would enable the Ludendorff military clique to go far towards convincing Germany that all her energies should be devoted towards preparing for another war.

On the other hand, it is impossible to contest the right of France to go into the Ruhr if she can gain by doing so, although, otherwise, it could not be too strongly condemned. However, M. Poincaré has already stated that he will not take that step unless he can make it productive. While we cannot reasonably say to France: "Germany won't pay you, but you must not execute your judgment," unless we are

prepared to add : " because, instead, we will pay you—directly or indirectly."

France is entitled to the fulfilment of the Treaty of Versailles, so far as it is possible for Germany to fulfil it : and Germany must not be the judge of what is or is not possible. Upon this issue Mr. Lloyd George's views were somewhat cloudy. He would never recognise—except intermittently—that France possessed any inherent right to the execution of the part of that Treaty which was of such vital interest to her.

That seems all the more remarkable when one remembers his intensity about the Treaty of Sèvres. The mystery of Mr. Lloyd George's enthusiasm for that ill-advised document has not yet been made clear. It did not in any way stand on the same level as the Treaty of Versailles. It had never been ratified by Turkey. But, apart from that, neither we nor France had much to gain by it. Indeed, it is interesting to examine its genesis. It was primarily the outcome of the perseverance of M. Venizelos. The latter is one of the most adroit and vainest politicians in Europe. It is a misfortune for a statesman when his views are too narrow for the legitimate aspirations of his country. But it is a misfortune for a country when the statesman who guides its destinies has aspirations which transcend the capabilities of his fellow citizens. M. Venizelos clearly belonged to the latter category. His cleverness enabled him to wrest from the dictators of the Peace Conference concessions to which Greece—never an Ally, sometimes lukewarmly in our favour and more often less than that—never had any right. Later, his refusal to take counsel with others lost him the support of a people who had

all his greed, all his cunning, but little of his deep intelligence.

The two misplaced figures at the Peace Conference were Venizelos and Paderewski. The former always gave the impression of a lawyer whose proper place was at the Bar of the Court of Appeal, coming to the Sessions to argue a case for one of his relatives. While the artistic and enthusiastic Paderewski oscillated between bewilderment at Mr. Lloyd George's rebuffs (for the former Prime Minister is rough to the weak more often than to the strong) and indignation when he realised the exact position.

Undoubtedly France is placed in a delicate position when she is required, at one and the same time, to safeguard herself and to show by example that she does not deem that force is the arbiter of the future. Still, it is only by succeeding in this that any permanent advantage is to be derived from Germany's present distrust of her former military leaders.

A nation of less than forty millions cannot for ever keep disarmed one of more than sixty millions, unless she herself gives some evidence of her belief in the blessings of disarmament. If the Germans are not a military race, they are, what is equally dangerous, a people who have no political instinct. They are certain to adopt unquestionably whatever their rulers may decree. They want to be governed, and will obey with a blind docility unknown in England. To-day Germany is uncertain which is the right path to take. The next few years will decide whether the military group, which now makes its headquarters in Munich, will again wield power or whether Germany will become convinced that in this century peaceful

ways pay better. The attitude adopted by France will be a determining factor in this matter. If that country, with her thirty-eight millions, shows a belief that force, and force alone, is decisive, Germany, with her sixty-one millions, will naturally look to the day when she can appeal to the only test which her neighbour considers final.

But if it is possible to give Germany a chance to work out her own salvation, above all, if she herself renders it possible by showing her sincerity, and recovers through years of stern civilian effort, it is conceivable that she will recognise that her future depends upon breaking with her past. The military party is well aware of this ; and therefore what it fears most is that the present régime should get a fair start and show that it can accomplish something.

Germany understood force, and force only, so long as she was persuaded that the rest of the world would allow her to adopt, and was adopting, that scale of measurement. Since then she has learned half the lesson. Whether she learns the other half (if, indeed, she can be taught it at all) depends largely upon the Allies. If they will not teach, or Germany cannot learn, the outlook is not cheerful. For the late struggle has left Germany fully convinced that war does not necessarily pay. But what has happened since 1918 has not entirely led her to believe that in the long run the greatest material advantages are to be obtained along the path of peace.

The lords of the Peace Conference (always excepting the sceptical Clémenceau) were loud in preaching, although not always consistent in applying, the doctrine of self-determination : the right of every people

to choose its own rulers. But it is difficult to draw a distinction between imposing an unwelcome governor and an unwelcome form of government. It is true that the German Revolution preceded the Peace Conference : although, in any event, President Wilson's conditions had practically exacted a change of régime. But I doubt whether in a referendum the Republic would to-day have a large majority against any suitable monarchical candidate.

Although it may be heresy to say so, the present form of government does not seem to be adapted to the needs of the German race. Possibly, if it made some progress in getting the country out of its troubles, public sentiment would change. But at present it seems as if the founders of the Empire, Bismarck and von Moltke, were right. The latter wrote : " There can be no doubt that every state requires a government suited to its individual idiosyncrasies. A Constitution like that of England . . . gradually developed out of the character of the nation, could never be transferred to the continent of Europe."

Indeed Bismarck was not only always infuriated by any suggestion that the English parliamentary system might be fully adopted, but he also foresaw that it would mean groups instead of two great parties. Speaking in the Diet in 1868, he said : " Constitutional government is impossible if the Government cannot rely upon one of its greater parties, even in such exceptional matters as are not entirely to the taste of the party. . . . If a Government has not at least one party in the country which regards its views and leanings from such a standpoint, it degenerates into coalition ministries, and its policy betrays

fluctuations which have a very prejudicial effect upon the state itself, and more especially upon the Conservative principle."

The very weakness of the present situation is that no party is sufficiently strong to impose any definite affirmative policy. Consequently there is a Coalition Government, dependent upon the support of various groups, which agree only on measures of evasion and delay, and pressed on one side by the Socialists and on the other by the great industrialists.

Among the latter the commanding figure is that of Hugo Stinnes. This man's sole interest in life is the accumulation of wealth, and the control of means which lead to that end. He reads many newspapers, but never a book; for he confesses that the cares and contests incidental to business satisfy all his mental cravings. When Stinnes discusses his Napoleonic plans for making more money his face lights up; it is the most overt sign of enthusiasm that he ever gives. But like many men who have devoted themselves heart and soul to one pursuit, he is rather naïve when he gets away from the subject of commercial conquests. His methods are direct and rapid. He is easily accessible to anyone who has anything serious to propose. But although he will listen, and to some extent talk, he will rarely decide without consulting some of his numerous advisers. Nevertheless, uncertainty and hesitation are unknown to him, while his fortune and the wealth which he represents have given him means to carry out his bold conceptions.

Rich when the war began, he was many-fold richer when it ended. Probably no man in any country made as much as did Stinnes between 1914 and 1920. Some

time ago he threatened to christen a ship which he was building "The Boche Hugo Stinnes." That was typical of his contemptuous indifference to what the world thinks or says. But he would have described himself more accurately had he called it "The Profiteer Hugo Stinnes," for assuredly he is the arch-profiteer. Nevertheless, I am inclined to think that the predominant position which he has occupied for the last few years is to-day somewhat impaired, although perhaps only temporarily. His enterprises have been too numerous. Moreover, although he was not opposed to the fall of the mark, since it strengthened the cry that Germany could not pay, and as he took precautions so that he personally should not be a loser, yet it became a different matter when the drop went far beyond what he had anticipated and when it got beyond all control.

There is little which is sympathetic about either Stinnes' actions or his personality. He rules his workmen by the force of his character. Unlike many great German industrialists, he has always been absolutely indifferent as to how or where they lived, and to everything about them, unless it directly paid him to be otherwise. On the other hand, he was largely responsible for the Belgians being taken to Germany as forced labourers, for that did pay Stinnes.

He does not want his country to meet the reparation claim, and protests that she cannot do so. Above all, he does not want Stinnes to be forced to disgorge the large amounts which he has placed out of the country.

Stinnes has recently bought many newspapers. He also controls the "Volkspartei" (which is the lineal

successor of the group formerly known as the National Liberals), of which Stresemann is the titular leader. But Stinnes is not very successful as a politician. His audacity, when the support of money is unavailing, simply degenerates into an overbearing insolence. His defiant attitude at Spa did untold harm to the cause he was sent there to plead. Later—in January, 1922—he suffered a more personal defeat. The Wirth Cabinet was being reconstructed, and Stinnes demanded two places for his henchmen, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and, above all, that of Foreign Affairs. He got neither. More galling still, the late Walther Rathenau, whom he held in particular detestation, was made Minister for Foreign Affairs. Stinnes, at least, acted promptly. The next morning Herr Stresemann notified the Chancellor that the "Volkspartei" withdrew from the agreement under which it had been supporting the Government, and retook its full liberty of action. And he settled his score when he forced Wirth's resignation in the following November.

From his appearance one would take Stinnes to be of Jewish birth, but, as a matter of fact, he is a Protestant, and one of the Anti-Semites who are so plentiful in Germany. He does not care to have any Jew working closely with him: and has even been known to manifest his disfavour to others who have taken Jews into their service, and who, in his opinion, should have known better. A holder of one of the names most renowned in the history of the German army, who himself became a banker after the war, told me that not only had Stinnes spoken disobligingly about him, but had even been hostile to him in

business, because he had taken a Jew as a partner. Stinnes also has careful inquiries made about the political views of anyone who comes to him seeking employment. Those are the small sides (or the narrow if deep convictions) of a man who takes a large view of most matters. At one time (and even during the early years of the war) he had a great admiration for the English and for English methods, but that has been warped by the passage of time.

But, above all, Stinnes is an intense patriot—or rather, intensely nationalist. This may sound inconsistent with some of the statements made about him, as it seems to be with some of his other actions. But he is German through and through. To such an extent is that true that he identifies himself and his great interests absolutely with his country. He is, in reality, much more national than is the average man who does international business, and more national than such a man should be. Too often his large vision stops short at the frontier. Moreover, when he ignores the regulations of the Government, it is probably because he thinks that he is acting in the interests of his country: anyway, he would not do so if he imagined that he thereby injured Germany.

Stinnes makes his home at Mülheim, where his forefathers lived, but he is generally to be found in the Berlin hotel which he owns.

The late Walther Rathenau was by training and instinct the complete antithesis of his rival Stinnes. He was a Jew, and one of the rare ones (Ballin was another, and his influence was good) who enjoyed the confidence of Wilhelm II. His name was known throughout Europe long before the war, and when

that of Stinnes was familiar only to Germans. He was a man of wider interests and more cultivated intellect than the latter, although not his equal as regards natural ability. Rathenau's character suffered from a vein of self-esteem from which the more primitive Stinnes is absolutely free. Yet he was much better fitted for political negotiation and much more dangerous in political intrigue.

Soon after the London ultimatum he expressed his conviction that Germany could meet its demands. But he was thereupon so bitterly attacked that he subsequently shifted his ground ; and in January, 1922, he was to be found at Cannes, as the person whom the Government had chosen as best fitted to prove that Germany could not pay. Probably this quick change did not in any way embarrass him, for it was not the first *volte-face* that he had made in his career. He was a man of many expedients rather than an opportunist, for his aims were more constant than his actions seemed to show. But the way he veered from point to point eventually produced a certain lack of confidence in the stability of his political opinions.

In the bitterness of spirit that has prevailed throughout Germany since 1918 this was bound to rouse animosity. Rathenau made many enemies, and not only amongst those who wished by any means to evade the execution of the Treaty of Versailles. Maximilien Harden, who goes much further than Rathenau ever did in denouncing the faults of Germany's former rulers and the incompetence of those now in power, told me in January, 1922, he had recently written Rathenau (who, like himself, lived at Grünewald) that his actions were so injurious in their incon-

sistency, and the insincerity of his conduct so apparent, that their friendship of many years must cease. Herr Harden was therefore doubly unlucky when, some days after Rathenau's assassination, he was assaulted by several ruffians, because he was thought to have been the latter's close friend.

Rathenau's death was undoubtedly a loss to Germany. The suppleness of his mentality may sometimes have been a drawback. But it did make him more apt than any other German in negotiations with the Allies: and the Foreign Office does not show any ability in that task.

It is commonly asserted in the Allied Press that the Wilhelmstrasse remains unchanged: that it is to-day controlled by the same people as before the war. The truth is that, while many did not care to serve under the new régime, a certain number remained, as much through a sense of duty as from personal inclination. But there is no such commanding figure as Holstein, who, from being a useful servant to the state, grew to that greatest of administrative curses, a permanent official who has annexed too much power and influence. A Foreign Office delivered over to a band of amateurs would soon be in a sad plight.

It is well for Germany that the Wilhelmstrasse was not disintegrated; it is absurd to imagine that the Allies would have gained by such a drastic change. The Wilhelmstrasse regrets some of its departed glories, but it cherishes no hope of witnessing their return: there is no room to-day for the courteous cosmopolitanism of a Prince Bülow. It is a loyal part of the Government of the Reich. Above all, it has no sympathy with the Munich group. Newspapers which

so glibly make that accusation forget the rivalry which has long existed between the Foreign Office and the military party, and which has been a factor in German history for the last half century. In his *Memoirs* Bismarck dilates at length on "the ill-feeling towards me which survived in the higher military circles from the Austrian war and lasted throughout the French war." But Bismarck could hold his own. His successors (barring Kiderlen Waechter) were but weaklings in comparison. They were often circumvented by the military chiefs, who were pertinacious in bringing influence to bear on the Kaiser. During the war, or at least after Hindenburg succeeded von Falkenhayn, the Foreign Office constantly lost ground. One of the few points which emerges clearly from the jumble of Ludendorff's various books of self-justification is that he thought that the Chancellor and the Wilhelmstrasse should, in the last analysis, be subservient to the General Staff.* He gives the latter credit for every success, and places on the Chancellor or Foreign Office the blame for every failure. But in the result public opinion seems to have decided that the General Staff was the more often at fault. To-day the Wilhelmstrasse is inclined discreetly to hold Ludendorff's obstinacy responsible for Germany's present position.

The Wilhelmstrasse is typically German, or, more exactly, typically Prussian. It possibly has and receives a greater store of information than any other Foreign Office. No other country has so many citizens who are faithful reporters of what they see

* I am aware that in one passage Ludendorff denies this, but his books are consistent only in their self-contradictions.

and hear abroad. But it does not know how to use its material. Nor has it the faculty of quickly and adroitly readjusting its position from time to time as circumstances may require. After paying due tribute to its diligence one must add that as an effective working machine it is outclassed both by the Quai d'Orsay and by Downing Street.

A lack of psychological instinct often leads it astray. It is not generally known that early in 1922 Berlin was excessively nervous about some military alliance being made between France and the Soviet Government. Incredible as that may seem, that was considered a possibility by the Foreign Office ; and the anxiety to prevent anything of the kind had not a little to do with the Treaty which the German Government hastily concluded with Moscow. But when the Bolsheviks made this document public at Genoa, the Wilhelmstrasse (as a German diplomatist told me with some bitterness) felt that it had been used as a tool ; for, according to the understanding, the arrangement should have been kept secret.

At present German political circles express great admiration for the way in which British foreign policy is conducted. That sentiment is quite sincere. It finds its culmination in the regard and esteem in which Lord D'Abernon is held. The British Ambassador plays a curious rôle in Berlin. In comparison the importance of all other diplomatic representatives fades into insignificance. Lord D'Abernon is credited with making and unmaking German Ministries. It was often said that Dr. Wirth was his Chancellor. That statement is an exaggeration. But it is true that all German politicians want to know what the

Ambassador thinks and what he says about every matter: and that the words which fall from his lips have their effect upon the situation.

It is a curious climax of a varied career. Lord D'Abernon is a man of many parts. He is equally at home—and equally interesting—in talking about Newmarket or in discussing the classics. He is as equally active and dangerous an opponent on a tennis court as in a diplomatic negotiation. But eight years ago Edgar Vincent, who having begun as a member of the Turkish Debt Commission had later achieved a reputation for his financial cleverness, little thought (nor did anyone else) that he would one day become British Ambassador in Berlin—by way of the Liquor Control Board. It was his aptitude and his adaptability as the head of that very arbitrary body which drew Mr. Lloyd George's attention to him as a useful man for future work.

One may disagree in some respects with the policy which Lord D'Abernon has pursued, and which he has to some extent inspired: for there was little or no Foreign Office control, and it is with and on Mr. Lloyd George whom he acted. But he has been a great representative of his country, since throughout he has added to her prestige. Few British Ambassadors make any lasting impression abroad. Few have left a name which has outlived the ordinary span of diplomatic memory. To them will doubtless be added that of Lord D'Abernon. Berlin will remember him as it still remembers that very different man—Odo Russell.

The German political world had always great faith in Mr. Lloyd George. That feeling extended even to the Press, as was shewn by articles in newspapers

having such widely differing views as the *Berliner Tageblatt* and the socialistic *Vorwaerts*. This confidence remained unshaken even after the Upper-Silesian decision, although the message sent through Lord D'Abernon had been considered an undertaking which was not fulfilled. Nevertheless, Mr. Lloyd George was still thought to be sympathetic to Germany, and secretly to favour many of her revindications.

But his position, on account of the French attitude, was admitted to be difficult. That view prevailed to such an extent that even when he occasionally made a clear pronouncement against Germany, when he said there must be payment in full (as he did some days after M. Poincaré succeeded M. Briand), it was put down as being a sop to France. This trust was based upon many things which Mr. Lloyd George had said : upon some things which he had done : and upon more which he had left undone. German politicians found much to encourage and to comfort them in his changeable course—from the time when he used to proclaim that the Kaiser would be tried, and that he would make Germany pay to the last penny, to the day (only eighteen months later) when at San Remo he berated M. Millerand for France's alleged imperialism. But the very fact that Mr. Lloyd George did not keep closely to one path was all to the good so far as Germany was concerned. She lost nothing by such fluctuations, while she always stood a chance of gaining by every turn of the wind.

The confidence of the Wilhelmstrasse and of the political world in Mr. Lloyd George was founded mainly upon two incidents, each, in its way, decidedly curious. They never forgot that when the Allies,

after months of debate, drafted the Treaty of Versailles, and gave it to the German delegates to consider, Mr. Lloyd George, at a succession of meetings, did his utmost to persuade M. Clémenceau and Mr. Wilson to alter it materially, to make it easier for Germany in respect to reparations, the occupied territory, and otherwise. Their only regret is that they did not know it at the time.

The other incident which led the Wilhelmstrasse to place hope in Mr. Lloyd's George's kindly intentions was his action during the political crisis following the London ultimatum in May 1921. Herr Stresemann, as leader of his party, gave Lord D'Abernon a memorandum containing certain definite questions respecting the attitude of Great Britain regarding the Upper-Silesian decision: and requested the Ambassador to transmit the latter and ask for a reply from the Prime Minister. In due course an answer was received which was considered fairly satisfactory. Had it arrived some days earlier, the composition of Dr. Wirth's Cabinet might have been different.

It has since been denied that this missive came from Mr. Lloyd George. But what has not been denied is that Stresemann sent, through the British Ambassador, a letter asking for a statement from the Prime Minister, and got a reply through the Ambassador, who satisfied him as to its source. In the result the hopes raised by this letter were not realised. But it was known that this exchange of communications was begun without prior consultation with the French Government. The Wilhelmstrasse and others not unnaturally regarded this as significant.

It would, however, be a mistake to think that the

Wilhelmstrasse seeks, as occasion offers, to make a breach between the Allies and France. In one way Germany would, of course, like to see that. So, too, would her Foreign Office. But the latter knows that Germany would be the loser. It realises that if there ever should be an absolute schism between the Allies, it is more likely than not that France would make the most of present opportunities, and would use its army to occupy further territory in default of prompt payments. Therefore, while the Press can never refrain from gloating over any passing differences of opinion between the two countries, the Wilhelmstrasse has no desire to witness any rupture.

The Germans have always been one of the kindest races in Europe, and they have not changed. That benignity is shown in their family affections, in their dealings with strangers, in their treatment of animals, and in divers other ways. So that these views may at least have their due weight, I should add that I am not an admirer of German character. There are certain elements in it which command respect, but in no way excite interest. Diligence alone can never rouse enthusiasm. If an infinite capacity for taking pains was a true test of genius (which it certainly is not), the Germans would be a nation almost entirely composed of geniuses. But they are too docile and unspeculative in action. This is quite in keeping with the fact that they have no sense of what is visually beautiful. That is reflected in their artistic productions. The German race has given birth to more musicians who can really be called great than any other country in the world. But in creating what appeals to the

eye—painting, sculpture—its record is comparatively a blank page.

But the fullest recognition of these limitations cannot blind one to the innate kindness of the race. Why, then, were they guilty of such atrocities during the war? That the number of atrocities was exaggerated is undeniable. Still, after all allowance is made for that, a good and well-proved balance remains. Possibly if several million of Allied troops had invaded an enemy country there would have been some similar acts. There always will be on the part of vast bodies of men in time of war. Nevertheless, one can be confident that the number of outrages would, even in those circumstances, have been much smaller than that for which the other side are responsible ; and the main reason for this is the one which goes to the root of the whole matter. There would never have been any such commands, direct or indirect, from British and French officers. Anything done that way would have been in spite of, and not in compliance with, orders. But, as was proved at Leipzig to the satisfaction of German judges, orders of that nature were given, more or less clearly, by German officers : and no soldiers obey so unquestioningly and so blindly as do the Germans.

This is the only feasible explanation of what at first sight appears to be an extraordinary contradiction. The same spirit of implicit obedience and submission to constituted authority is also a key to a great part of the political history of Germany, to her situation to-day, and to her future to-morrow.

The German officer—the professional soldier—stands apart from the rest of the race. Whatever may be

his natural inclinations, he cultivates ruthlessness. Before the war he instilled it as a virtue ; during the war he practised it ; and to-day he is still preaching it. When one remembers what the German army did (especially during the early days of the war), how it brought on itself the condemnation of the world, and how Ludendorff and others to-day sincerely and calmly continue to teach the same lesson, one is forced to the conclusion that their type is the embodiment of Talleyrand's saying: " On peut militariser un civil, mais on ne peut pas civiliser un militaire."

Whether or not they are successful in their present efforts—efforts which contemplate action at some distant date and are therefore brought to bear mainly upon the youth of the nation—depends to some extent upon the Allies.

CHAPTER XIII

THE RUHR

SINCE the preceding chapters were written the logical consequences of Germany's persistent attitude have ensued, and the European situation has entered upon a new phase.

It was evident to all who had followed the course of events that M. Poincaré's accession to office meant a duel with Mr. Lloyd George; and that upon the result of that encounter depended the immediate future of France. Behind Poincaré was M. Millerand—Millerand, who is even more insistent than Poincaré upon strong action being taken against Germany; and who (it is no secret) has from time to time complained that the *Président du Conseil* was not showing sufficient speed or firmness. If Mr. Lloyd George had been able to play with Poincaré as he had done with his predecessors (including Millerand himself), it would have been impossible for any other French politician to have retrieved matters. France would then have been well advised to realise that reparations in any substantial amounts had vanished in a mist of words.

But the late Prime Minister's star began to pale from the moment he was unable, and precisely because he was unable, to entice M. Poincaré into his net—as I ventured to predict would be the case. The Genoa Conference, by which Mr. Lloyd George intended

to solidify his predominance in European affairs, actually marked the beginning of his downfall; for the object which it was sought to achieve at any sacrifice was too apparent. Even in the United States it excited the most adverse comment. Dr. David Jayne Hill expressed moderate American opinion when he wrote: "The historian will have no difficulty in showing, with the documents in hand, that, when all the pious professions with which it is customary to make doubtful adventures respectable are stripped away, the Genoa Conference was a market for the purchase and sale of stolen property."

After Genoa Mr. Lloyd George's decline was rapid. His departure freed France of her most redoubtable because of her least open opponent: for it is only since he left Downing Street that the late Prime Minister has, in a series of newspaper articles, unreservedly shown his real feelings towards our Ally. But to-day, if it were necessary to replace M. Poincaré, the President would not look in vain for someone who would carry on the same policy with equal vigour. It is indeed curiously typical of the Germans' misconception of realities that those of them who are now beginning to lose faith in the Stinnes plan of resistance should yet cling to the hope that chance may bring about Poincaré's resignation. They forget that M. Millerand is firmly ensconced in the Elysée for more than four years to come; that he takes a more active part in controlling the policy of the Government than did any of his predecessors. In fact, the course which M. Millerand has followed has been quite consistent with the warning that he issued when, rather against his will, he finally agreed to accept the succession of M. Deschanel. In many respects the Republic gains

by having as its head an active intelligence instead of a respectable nonentity—as was M. Fallières. But the system also has its disadvantages. This was clearly illustrated at the Lausanne Conference. It is notorious that for many weeks the two French delegates, M. Bompard and M. Barrère, were in absolute disaccord the one with the other ; in fact, their disagreement continued until M. Barrère finally left. And it is no secret that M. Bompard represented the views of M. Poincaré, while the French Ambassador in Rome was supporting the ideas of M. Millerand.*

In any event, the latter will never keep for long any Ministry which does not take as its keynote the necessity of forcing Germany to pay. Any failure on the part of M. Poincaré would only mean (at least, during the life of the present Parliament ; and I do not believe that the next general election will make any great change) that his place would be taken by someone else—perhaps even M. André Tardieu, with whom M. Millerand is said to have flirted—who would follow the same course. France has not the slightest intention of retreating from her present stand. For more than three years she waited for Mr. Lloyd George to obtain execution of the Treaty, of which he was one of the principal authors. The former Prime Minister admitted that Germany was evading her obligations. But he seemed unable or unwilling to take any practical steps to enforce payment ; while he bitterly resented any attempt on the part of anyone else to do so.

Shortly after the San Remo Conference M. Millerand

* It is generally understood that in M. Poincaré's Cabinet, M. Le Trocquer is more or less the spokesman of M. Millerand.

(who was then *Président du Conseil*) said to me that, if the Treaty of Versailles was in fact unworkable, it was the duty of a Prime Minister to disclose that fact to Parliament, and to propose a revision, and that he himself would do so if he ever reached that conclusion. But Mr. Lloyd George would never admit that his work was a failure, and yet he never obtained results—for France. In the end he exhausted French patience; and, indirectly, that brought about his downfall.

In a previous chapter I expressed the opinion that it would be regrettable if Germany made it necessary that more of her territory should be occupied. But by her constant bad faith, and her obstinacy in the belief that she could for ever evade payment, she finally left no alternative to France.

It is instructive to recall briefly the successive steps in the history of the reparation payments. They illustrate the patience and forbearance which France has shown.

The Treaty of Versailles did not fix the amount to be paid by Germany, but provided that a decision on that point should be made by the Reparation Commission before May 1st, 1921. In January, 1921, it was decided, not by the Reparation Commission (which was temporarily supplanted), but by an Inter-Allied Conference held in Paris, that in the course of forty-two years Germany should pay £11,300,000,000. A German counter-proposal that the total should be 30,000,000,000 gold marks—equivalent to £1,500,000,000—was rejected. But in April, 1921, the Reparation Commission reconsidered the matter, and finally placed the amount at 132,000,000,000 gold marks, or £6,600,000,000. Faced by the alterna-

tive of the occupation of the Ruhr, Germany accepted these terms on May 12th, 1921 ; and for some months payments were made accordingly.

But the subsequent fall of the mark led to a demand for a further alleviation. In March, 1922, the Reparation Commission decreased the immediate payments ; and the instalments then stipulated were paid until July, 1922, when Germany requested a moratorium. Since then the Allies have never arrived at any definite permanent readjustment. But the net result is that all Germany has paid has not sufficed to defray the cost of occupation ; and that France, through having made advances on this score, is to-day a heavier creditor of Germany than she was when the Treaty of Versailles was signed.

Throughout the Allies have been moderate in their exactions. But unfortunately they ignored a dictum once pronounced by Emile Ollivier : " *L'énergie dans les résolutions modérées, c'est la marque des hommes d'État.*" * Their own neglect in this respect naturally encouraged the German Government to pursue a policy of deceitful evasion.

In such matters the amounts actually paid by a country are of no more, and, indeed, are sometimes of less, importance than the evidence it gives of its desire to meet its liabilities. Before putting forward the proof of Germany's bad faith, a comparison may aptly be made with the conduct of the rulers of another nation when faced by a similar problem. Towards the end of April, 1871, M. Thiers' Ministry of Finance, M. Pouyer-Quertier, sent for the permanent official at

* Written on a panel in Count Joseph Primoli's palace in Rome, at a date when Emile Ollivier had already had many years in which to ponder on his own errors.

the head of the French Treasury, M. Collard-Dutilleul, and asked him of what funds the Government could dispose ; for Germany had to be paid an indemnity of 2,000,000,000 francs, of which the instalments would begin to fall due in a few months, and forty-five departments (from which no taxes had been collected) had been invaded.

“ Oh, monsieur,” replied M. Collard-Dutilleul, “ I can easily bring you all we have. I can put it all in my hat. There is exactly five hundred thousand francs.”

Nevertheless, six months later France paid 1,500,000,000 francs. Upon that occasion (October 11th, 1871), M. Pouyer-Quertier was able to telegraph from Berlin to M. Thiers : “ I was received by the Emperor at noon. He welcomed me in the most kindly fashion, and told me that the German Government had high praise for the way in which France had fulfilled her engagements ; and that it was on account of this exactitude that the demand which had been made for guarantees had been abandoned.”

Certainly the amounts payable after 1870 and after 1918 were different—very different : but still greater is the difference between the spirit and good faith exhibited by France in the former instance and the tactics now followed by Germany, ranging as they have from deliberate attempts at evasion to actual trickery and fraud. The Allies throughout have made the mistake of giving too much attention as to whether or not Germany could finally pay the total sum, and not enough to taking care that she actually paid what she could from year to year. For it was obviously futile to listen to Germany’s own complaints about the limits of her capacity unless assured of her good faith—her

desire and intention to pay all she could. On this point the recent remarks of a well-known German economist are enlightening. Writing in *Die Banke*, in January, 1923, Herr Alfred Lansburg said: "As long as the intolerable state of affairs whereby Germany's obligations are proportioned to her capacity to pay continues, every German government will consider it its duty to make the capacity of the country appear as small as possible."

But if Germany pretends that she is unable to find money for the reconstruction of France, she is never at any loss to produce it for the reconstruction of German commerce. One example (perhaps the most flagrant) out of many will suffice. Before the war the German merchant service was of about 5,000,000 tons. The ships left her after the Treaty of Versailles aggregated about 420,000 tons. Nevertheless, the Government calculated that there had been a loss of 7,500,000 tons, and in February, 1921, made an arrangement with the German shipping industry whereby the latter was to receive a subsidy of twelve milliards of marks for the reconstruction of one-third of this amount—2,500,000 tons. Four milliards were paid when the agreement was signed, and the balance was to be given in certain fixed instalments. In September, 1922, the shipowners, as the result of arbitration, got an award of an extra eighteen milliards on account of the depreciation of the mark. But the instalments which fell due later also took into account the mark's further fall: and in the result, instead of thirteen milliards of marks, the shipowners got thirty-two and a half milliards for the period between September and December, 1922. On December 13th the Reparation Commission

protested : which, however, did not prevent the Reich from making a payment on December 15th.

The German attitude in paying these subsidies, while in default under the Treaty, was so glaring that Sir John Bradbury recently departed from his usual abstention from voting at meetings of the Reparation Commission, and recorded his protest. It was unfortunate, although natural, that this should have led to an American comment that Sir John's voice was heard once again merely because England's interests were being affected.

It clearly was hardly worth while, at least from the French point of view, to deprive Germany of her merchant fleet, if the payment of reparations was to be subordinated to the building of another to take its place. While it may be added that it is the German Government itself which has wantonly contributed to the *débâcle* of the mark by thus printing paper money.

The occupation of the Ruhr has also disclosed the fraud in connection with the coal-tax ; the Stinnes and other groups having been allowed to delay payment while the mark deteriorated in value. But it is unnecessary to recite all of Germany's many tricks. Her intention to evade her obligations was shown long ago. It was apparent not only to M. Clémenceau, but even to Mr. Lloyd George, who, speaking in the House of Commons on May 5th, 1921, said : " We have been driven to take strong action, not merely from the fact that Germany has defaulted, but by her general attitude toward the whole question, and by the growing indication that Germany did not intend to carry out her obligations. She was making excuses not merely for delay, but for avoidance."

Whatever one may think of the ill-advised course

pursued by Germany's rulers, there is nothing to be gained by railing at the German people: and all the less so since they are bound to be the eventual sufferers. The questions which do present themselves are whether France could have done anything effective, and, above all, whether she is likely to be the gainer by the policy which she has elected to follow.

At one time there were suggestions about a reference to the League of Nations. I am perhaps prejudiced, because, like one of Gissing's characters, "I don't know that I have much faith in leagues. I am a lost individualist. Let everyone try to civilise himself; depend upon it, it's the best work he can do for the world at large." * It is, of course, impossible not to recognise the good work which the League is attempting to do under great difficulties. But unless and until the United States comes into the fold, even its moral influence (and it has no other) is more apparent than real. That was illustrated recently when Chili and Peru, instead of submitting their forty-year-old Tacna-Arica boundary dispute to the League, had recourse to the United States. In any event, there was no good reason why France should have placed her treaty rights in jeopardy by submitting them to that mixed tribunal.

France and Belgium will certainly encounter many difficulties in the Ruhr. But they can meet them alone and are in no need of military or other assistance; while there can be no manner of doubt that if they consolidate their position, the operation will be successful in more ways than one. Already there are signs that Germany would like to negotiate if the Allies would first withdraw: that is, she would be willing to

* Sir William Amys in *Our Friend the Charlatan*.

do something which she would not do before the Ruhr was occupied. But that will not now suffice: and France will stay in the Ruhr—even for a number of years if necessary—until she has received payment or serious guarantees.

In the meantime the misguided men who now govern Germany seem to be determined that they will make out the worst possible case for their country in the eyes of the world. The *Furor Teutonicus*, with its fangs drawn, is a stupid exhibition of impotent rage at being found out and tied down. While the prodigality with which money is provided to stimulate resistance, although none could previously be found for reparations, carries its own comment upon a shameless lack of good faith.

The truth is that (not for the first time) Germany has lagged behind the rest of the world, and has got entirely out of touch with the psychology of the situation. She is still talking about who was responsible for the war, apparently not perceiving that all other countries are tired of that controversy. For the matter at issue to-day is not who caused the war, but who is going to pay for it; and the two questions are not so closely connected the one with the other as Germany imagines. There is, indeed, reason to believe that the Wilhelmstrasse is far from happy about existing conditions; and that it realises that mistakes are being made for which the toll will be heavy and lengthy. But the Foreign Office is now powerless. Under the chancellorship of Herr Cuno, the great industrialists, headed by Hugo Stinnes, absolutely control the situation. It has become a contest between France on the one side and, on the other, a group of men who have become richer as their

fellow-citizens have become poorer : a group which is fighting to maintain a state of affairs which could not prevail if Germany began to meet her obligations in the true measure of her capacity.

The dishonesty in respect to the coal tax illustrates how Stinnes and his friends turn their political influence into personal profit. According to a well-informed German source—the *Frankfurt Gazette*—the arrears attained as high a figure as 25 milliards of marks. This total consisted of payments which should have been made to the Treasury during the latter half of 1922—exactly the months when the mark was falling rapidly. A large part of this accumulation has now been paid. But the amounts due at the end of August and the beginning of September, when the value of the mark was 1,700 to the dollar, were only paid between three and four months later, when the mark was worth anywhere from 8,000 to 49,000 to the dollar.

It is obvious that the industrial magnates have everything to lose and nothing to gain by any change ; they could hardly expect greater latitude under any circumstances. But it is different with the mass of German people ; and however bitter they may be about the occupation of the Ruhr, they are also resenting the fact that the chief effect of their opposition is to protect the fortunes of Stinnes and others who have waxed rich on their misfortunes. The German Socialists are under no illusions, but they are giving an admirable example of patriotism. They neither seek to impede the Government nor do they wish to take office themselves. But they doubt the wisdom of the course now being pursued ; and they fear that the wage-earners will be the victims in the future as they have been in the past. Herr Loebe

made this clear in a speech at Breslau, when he also took occasion to point out that 84 per cent. of the taxes were collected from those earning wages or drawing salaries.

Moreover, it is the Socialists who have put before their country most clearly the real danger of the Ruhr occupation: a danger in comparison with which some loss by Stinnes and a few others is as nothing from any national point of view—the danger of the disintegration of the Reich. Undoubtedly the industrialists also recognise the risk; but for obvious reasons they will not acknowledge it.

The Ruhr is the richest part of Germany. It is, indeed, perhaps the richest area of its size in the world. Its separation from the rest of the country by an economic barrier may well prove to be a first step to detaching it from the control of Berlin. The population of all the occupied territory (including the Ruhr) is something over ten million, about one-sixth of the total population of Germany. These people are not animated by any deep affection either for Prussia or for the Reich. Amongst one section, indeed, there has always been a certain sentiment in favour of autonomy. I believe that the numerical strength of that movement has generally been exaggerated; but conceivably it might be fostered by an occupation extending over a lengthy period. It is therefore Germany which is taking the great risk in this adventure. Unless she pays or gives proper guarantees, her most productive territory will be severed from the rest of the country; while in any event she has now revealed to the whole world what some affirmed, what some denied, and what others doubted—that her rulers are doing their utmost to evade her obligations, and

that they have at least tolerated the sustenance of sentiments of revenge. Time will show that by this exposure Germany has not only been her own worst enemy, but that she has enormously strengthened the French position.

France and Belgium undoubtedly can, and if necessary will, take over the operation of all public services in the Ruhr. Whether or not they will obtain the quantities of coal they had in view is now less certain ; and is also now of less importance. For the unexpected resistance of the German Government has altered the face of the whole situation. Its open defiance has effected a change in the objects of the occupation. Germany's demand for a revision of the Treaty of Versailles has become a double-edged sword. The Reich has forced France to remind the German people and its leaders, in the forcible fashion which they will understand, that Germany promised in 1918 to make certain amends for the harm she had caused by disturbing the peace of the world ; to remind them that they lost the war, and that they are still in default. It is regrettable that after four years it should be necessary to recall these facts. But it would have been otherwise had Germany spent that period in an honest endeavour to fulfil her engagements. However, the occupation of the Ruhr has led those now in power in Germany to fall into the error of revealing that, if they were able to do so, they would not hesitate again to plunge the world into war in order to achieve their ends. It is a disclosure which will have a far-reaching effect upon the future of their country.

No temporary disorders or disturbances in the Ruhr are of the least permanent importance. The whole performance is suggestive of a street urchin, who has

been caught in the act, wildly trying to kick a burly police constable in whose hands he is struggling. For in the last analysis Germany must now pay or must submit to see the Reich split by the separation from the rest of the country of its richest territory and one-sixth of its population. No other result is possible, if France stands firm. The only question is how long mad rage will rule instead of sanity and common sense; how long the greed of a few will be allowed to mortgage the future of a whole race.

I am one of those who regret that English troops are not side by side with those of France and Belgium. Possibly a different decision might have been taken had Mr. Bonar Law had more time to consider in all its aspects the legacy bequeathed him by Mr. Lloyd George—the mess about which the former Prime Minister was so spitefully exultant. But the situation has its compensations. Indeed, a much more deplorable mistake was the Government's proposal of terms which would have allowed Germany to wax fat for some years, while France starved financially. The amazing plan which Mr. Bonar Law put forward in Paris (and in which, rightly or wrongly, the French political world thinks it discerns the fine hand of Lord D'Abernon) compelled M. Poincaré to face the issue: can two walk together unless they be agreed?

The Président du Conseil took the only path which was open to him, unless he chose to admit that the great industrialists of Germany were powerful enough to bar the way to France's legitimate claims and to the execution of the Treaty; the only path which could lead to some relief for his much-tried country; and, incidentally, the only path if he himself was to remain in office. Tenaciously as France has clung to

the alliance with Great Britain—even when it brought no tangible result—in the end she naturally and properly did not sacrifice her own welfare to sentiment. The most significant result of this independent action is that it has been taken without any breach with England, and that the latter's abstention has not caused any widespread bitterness. Nothing is more indicative of the change wrought by Mr. Bonar Law's advent to power ; for under Mr. Lloyd George such a course would have entailed a flood of recriminatory speeches.

Nevertheless, the simile used by the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ronald McNeill, was not very felicitous. In explaining the attitude of the Government, he suggested that France was killing the goose which might—one day—lay the golden eggs, if only she was sufficiently fed in the meantime. The obvious answer was that a man who is starving in January finds it a sorry job to fatten a goose for Michaelmas—or for the Ides of March.

The fact that the British Government has chosen to stand aside really gives France (who, despite Mr. Lloyd George's prediction, is by no means isolated) greater liberty of action. But whatever may be the result of the Ruhr occupation, it is not likely to strengthen Mr. Bonar Law's position. For if it should prove to be unsuccessful, the cry will be, "Lloyd George's prediction was right" ; and, if it is successful, "Bonar Law's course was wrong."

Unfortunately the Cabinet's decision was probably characteristic ; its tendency towards studied moderation (in reaction to Mr. Lloyd George's fantastic outbursts) may possibly lead it to immobility. Of that weakness advantage will quickly be taken by Mr. Ramsay

MacDonald and his followers: and in politics any positive and affirmative policy will always defeat one of negation. Already the Labour Party appears to be making some capital out of this situation. Yet in urging its own views about the relief which it alleges is essential for Germany, it has yet to explain why payment of our debt to the United States (against which it never protested with any vigour) would not be equally ruinous to this country.

What is of more far-reaching account than the solidity of Mr. Bonar Law's government is that by carefully, if politely, standing on one side, by adopting a cautious policy of "Wait and see," we are losing, or at least imperilling, our leadership in Europe. We blamed the United States for becoming spectators; we accused them of evading their responsibility; and to-day we are doing the same thing. The excuse of our American friends was that they were unaffected by events which took place at a distance of three thousand miles—and already they are finding out their mistake. We have no such stretch of ocean between us and the Continent—and we shall discover our error more quickly.

The great Earl of Aberdeen once said: "The best friend of England must necessarily be that Power from whose designs the peace of Europe has least to fear." The events of the last few weeks have proved that to-day that Power is France. Germany may look forward to another war. But our Ally has shown that she has no desire for territorial aggrandisement; and that, apart from payment under the Treaty, all that she seeks is protection against future aggression.

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